THE COUNTRY-PARSON'S ADVICE TO HIS Parishioners.

In Two Parts.

I. Containing a Plain and Serious Exhortation to a Religious and Virtuous Life.

II. General Directions how to Live accordingly.

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Franciſci Suarez Tractatus de Legibus ac Deo Legiſlatore. fol.

Cauſin's Holy Court. fol.

Arch-Biſhop *Bramhal's* works.

A Collection of all the Statutes now in Force in the Kingdom of *Ireland.* fol.

Baker's Chronicle of *England.* fol.

Biſhop *Sanderſon's* Sermons. fol.

Le Beau Pleadeur, Judge *Winche's* Book of Entries.

Holyoake's large Dictionary in 3. parts. fol.

Dr. *Browne's* Travails. 4°.

A True Widow, a *Comedy* by *Tho. Shadwel.* 4°.

Dr. *Dumoulin's* Vindication of the Proteſtant Religion. 4°.

Phocæna, or the Anatomy of a *Porpeſs* by *E. Tyſon.* 4°.

Dodwel's ſeparation of Churches from Epiſcopal Government as practiſed by our preſent Non-Conformiſts, proved Schiſmatical. 4°.

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——Some Conſiderations of preſent Concernment, how far Romaniſts may be truſted by Princes of another Perſuaſion. 8°.

——Two ſhort Diſcourſes againſt the Romaniſts. 12°.

Stearne de obſtinatione. Præfixa ſunt Prolegomena *H. Dodwel.* 8°.

Evelyn of Navigation and Commerce.

Biſhop *Wetenhal* of Gifts and Offices in the Publick Worſhip of God. 8°.

——The Catechiſm of the Church of *England* with Marginal Notes. 8°.

Balei Elenchus motuum. 8°.

Langhornii Chronicon Regum Anglorum. 8°.

Poems and Songs by *T. Flatman.* 8°.

Poems by *N. Tate.* 8°.

The French Gardiner. 8°.

Gardiner de Trinitate, contra *Sandium.* 8°.

Phædri Fabulæ in uſum Scholar. 8°.

Dumoulins ſhort view of the Points in Controverſy between us and the Romaniſts.

Herbert's Country-Parſon. 12°.

Wenſely on the Church Catechiſm. 12°.

Henſhaw's Regiſter of the Air. 12°.

A Letter of Advice to a young Gentleman leaving the Univerſity.

A SERIOUS EXHORTATION TO A Religious and Virtuous Life.

The Introduction.

I Deſign, (dear Brother) through God's grace, to give thee the beſt aſſiſtance I can, in a Religious and Virtuous life; to direct thee how to live to God's glory, and to attain that perfect, and happy Eſtate, which God hath made thee capable of, and which thy Saviour deſires to bring thee to, by that Holy Religion which thou doſt profeſs. But before thou doſt accept of my aſſiſtance, and direction, it may be, thou wilt deſire to know, whether there be any reaſon why thou ſhouldeſt apply thy ſelf to live ſuch a life, and whether thou mayeſt not as prudently let it alone, and live as the moſt of thy neighbours doe; and therefore I deſire, that thou wouldeſt doe me, and thy ſelf, the kindneſs, ſeriouſly to conſider the following things.

CHAP. I.

Containing the first Argument to a Holy Life: viz. *That being God's Creatures we ought to be subject to God, as all other Creatures are; to observe the laws of our creation, and consult the Honour and Dignity of our Natures.*

FOraſmuch as thou knoweſt that thou art God's Creature, and did'ſt receive thy Being and life from him, and ſubſiſteſt altogether in him, thou muſt neceſſarily acknowledge that thou art, and oughteſt to be at his diſpoſal, and to live, and act according to his intention, and the end for which thou waſt made. As thou art God's Creature, and haſt no other Being than what thou haſt received from him, ſo thou canſt have no power nor end, but what he who gave thee thy Being, giveth, and preſcribeth to thee. This is a law which all the Creatures of God are, and muſt neceſſarily be ſubject to, and thou ſeeſt that all the inferior Creatures doe act according to it: they doe employ themſelves, according to the capacity of their Being, in that for which God Created them, and tend directly to the end, for which they were Created, and ordained; and therefore,

thou

thou can'ſt not but know, that thou oughteſt to do ſo likewiſe, and that, for whatever end thou waſt Created, thou art conſtantly to intend and proſecute the ſame in thy whole life. Couldeſt thou thy ſelf give life, and Being to any thing, thou wouldeſt and mighteſt juſtly expect the ſame from it. And therefore, I muſt beſeech thee to conſider why and for what end God gave thee thy Being: for, That thou art indiſpenſably obliged to intend, and proſecute. Now thou art ſenſible, that thou haſt an excellent Being, and that the other Creatures, which thou beholdeſt in the World, are much inferior to thee. Thou haſt an Underſtanding, and by that the knowledge of things, which they have not, and cannot have, *viz.* of things Spiritual and Immaterial: Thou haſt a will free to chuſe, or refuſe, to do, or not to do, according to the direction of thy Underſtanding, without Coaction or Compulſion; whereas they act neceſſarily, and without any ſuch liberty: thou haſt deſires implanted in thy Soul after things, which they have no apprehenſion of; and art capable of ſome enjoyments, which they are altogether uncapable of: to what end then, hadſt thou this excellent Being beſtowed upon thee, and what is it, that thou art to aim at, to deſire, and endeavour whileſt thou art in the world? Can'ſt thou think, when thou ceaſ-

dereſt thy own faculties, and capacities, that thou waſt made meerly to get a little mony, by carking and careing, by toyling and ſweating, by plotting and contriveing? a poor buſineſs ſurely for ſuch an excellent Creature to be employed about! and thou debaſeſt thy ſelf extreamly, and reproacheſt thy Maker, if thou doſt imagine it. But Brother, thou knoweſt that mony is not a thing deſireable for it ſelf, but for Uſe, as it procures neceſſaries for the belly and the back, and things grateful, and pleaſing to ſenſual appetites and deſires; and therefore, thou muſt enquire further, whether thou waſt made only to eat and drink, and having made proviſion for the fleſh, to fulfill the luſts thereof: and I beſeech thee, brother, tell me, whether this will not ſink thee down into the condition of the beaſts, and birds, and reflect as injuriouſly upon thy Maker; for certainly, they are as capable of ſuch gratifications, and ſatisfactions, as thou art, notwithſtanding thy excellent Spirit and better capacities: they can feaſt as guſtfully upon thoſe proviſions that God hath made for them, as thou can'ſt do, and ſing as merrily. Thou doſt not Cloath thy ſervant in purple, and fine linnen, to ſend him to the plough: nor bring up thy child in all the polite learning of the world, on purpoſe to imploy him in feeding hogs: and if thou ſhouldeſt

eſt ſee thy neighbour act ſo fooliſhly, thou would'ſt not fail to deride him for it. And wilt thou dare to impute the like folly to the wiſe Creator, and Governor of the World, and believe that he hath given thee an immortal Spirit, to be imployed only about the Objects of Senſe, to the end that thou may'ſt live like the Beaſts that periſh? far be it from thee. Thou art made certainly for a much better, and nobler end than they were, and the conſideration of the powers, and capacities of thy Soul, would lead thee to the knowledge of it, though God had given thee no other means of knowing it. Thou art capable of knowing thy Creator, of contemplating his infinite perfections, of admiring, and praiſing, and loving what thou knoweſt. Though thou liveſt in the world, yet thou can'ſt have thy mind in Heaven, and dwell with God by deſire and love; and whil'ſt thou doſt feaſt thy ſenſes upon theſe material and periſhing things, thou can'ſt feaſt thy Spirit much more upon the never failing wiſdom, and goodneſs of the Maker of all things. Thou knoweſt him to be the ſupream Good, and that every thing is good, and happy only ſo far as it partakes of his goodneſs, and felicity; and thou knoweſt that there can be no neerer, no other way to perfect happineſs, than to give up thy ſelf wholly

to him, to ſubmit to his goverment and Conduct, to doe whatever he will have thee to do, to ſuffer all that he will lay upon thee; to have thine eye always upon him, to delight thy ſelf in him, to deſire and hope more fully and perfectly to know him, and enjoy him. Theſe things thou knoweſt, or may'ſt know, and thou art capable of acting according to thy knowledge: thou can'ſt give thy ſelf to God, thou can'ſt ſubmit thy ſelf to him, thou can'ſt ſerve him, and obey him with a chearful and active ſervice, thou can'ſt praiſe, and magnifie him, and relie altogether upon him, and hope and long for a compleat fruition of him. Behold then, what thou waſt made to do, and obſerve how thou art to imploy thy ſelf in the World. Here is thy end, and this is thy work, a work worthy of ſo excellent a Creature; it is called in one word, to ſerve God; and whatſoever thou do'ſt, or endeavoureſt to do, or beſtoweſt thy time in, that is contrary, or impertinent to this end, is but vanity and folly, meer loſt labour, and will bring forth no fruit but grief and ſorrow, ſhame and confuſion; for that, it is not the work that we came into the world to do. We were made men, *that is* in the Image of God, not to live like beaſts, no, nor to pleaſe our ſelves in any way; but to ſerve, and pleaſe, and glorify God here, and to poſſeſs and enjoy

him

him for ever hereafter. Judge then, good Brother, whether thou haſt not reaſon to ſerve God with all thy Might in a holy and Virtuous life.

CHAP. II.

Containing a ſecond argument to a Holy Life, from thoſe obligations which our profeſſion of Chriſtianity laies on us.

FOraſmuch as thou doſt profeſs thy ſelf a Chriſtian, I muſt deſire thee to conſider ſeriouſly, what that Chriſtianity is which thou doſt profeſs, and what the profeſſion of it doth oblige or bind thee to. To this purpoſe, I beſeech thee to reflect upon thy Baptiſm, and to call to mind what was then tranſacted, and done between God and thy Soul, or (which is all one) between God and the Church in thy behalf. Now, in that Holy Ceremony thou waſt dedicated to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt; and, renouncing the World the Fleſh and the Devil, did'ſt promiſe, and vow obedience to all his commandments; and God did mercifully accept of thy abrenuntiation, and dedication; and did take thee into his houſe and family, that family which Chriſt did purchaſe with his bloud, and

which he governs by his Spirit, and for which he hath prepared everlaſting bliſs, and Glory. Thou waſt then taken off that rotten, and corrupt Stock of the firſt and earthly *Adam*, which brings forth fruit only to Death and Deſtruction, and grafted into the living Stock of the ſecond and Spiritual *Adam*, which fructifies to everlaſting Glory, and Happineſs. Thou didſt renounce that Principle of Sin and Death, which thou didſt derive from thy firſt Parents, and whatever is grateful and pleaſing to it; and giving up thy ſelf to God, thou waſt received by him, and given to his Son Jeſus Chriſt, who took poſſeſſion of thee by his Spirit, which is a Principle of new life in thee. That all this is done in Baptiſm, not in Ceremony, and by way of repreſentation only, but in deed, and in real effect, is plain enough in the Scriptures. Thou may'ſt look into the following places for thy Satisfaction. Our Bleſſed Saviour tells us, *John* 15. *v.* 5. *I am the Vine, and ye are the Branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, bringeth forth much fruit.* Now, this Abiding in him, doth preſuppoſe our Ingrafting into him: and this was done in our Baptiſm; for then, as the Apoſtle St. *Paul* tells us, 1. Epiſtle to the *Corinth.* 12. 13. *v. We were baptized by one ſpirit into one body*; and that Body *is the body of Chriſt*, as you will ſee *v.* 27. of the ſame Chapter. And

therefore

therefore, we are ſaid in Baptiſm *to put on Chriſt*, Gal. 3. v. 27. and in the *6th* Chapter to the *Romans*, we are ſaid *to be planted together* (*viz.* by Baptiſm) *in the likeneſs of Chriſt's death*, v. *5th.* and by this the ſame Apoſtle tells us, *That we are ſaved*, Titus 3. v. 5. *According to his mercy he ſaved us, by the waſhing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt.* And, that we cannot (ordinarily) be ſaved without this Waſhing, and Renewing; our Bleſſed Saviour told *Nicodemus*, John 3. v. 5. *Except a man be regenerated of water, and the ſpirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.* Theſe places of Scripture being underſtood in that ſence, which the firſt and beſt Chriſtians did take them in, do teach us all that which I ſaid before concerning Baptiſm; and the Church, whereto we do belong, underſtanding them accordingly, doth teach us the ſame, both in the Office of Baptiſm, and the Catechiſm, telling us, that in Baptiſm *we are regenerated*, and *made members of Chriſt, and inheritors of* (*that is* we have a Right thereby to inherit) *the Kingdom of Heaven.* Thou ſeeſt then (dear Brother) what thou art, as thou art a Chriſtian, and what thou profeſſeſt thy ſelf to be. Thou art ſeparated from the world, dedicated and conſecrated to God, united to Chriſt Jeſus, and in him and by him a Child of God, and an Heir of everlaſting Life. Thou art

art not thy own (therefore) but God's, and thou art his, not only by Creation, but by Redemption and Purchaſe, by thy own act, and voluntary reſignation of thy ſelf to him, by Covenant and Promiſe, by a real incorporation into the Body of Chriſt, and the participation of his Spirit. This is an honourable and a happy Eſtate, and it was a wonderful Grace, that ſuch a worthleſs, rebellious Creature ſhould ever be admitted into it. And need I now to tell thee (Brother) what kind of life, ſuch a man as thou art, and in ſuch an Eſtate ought to live? It is a rule in Nature, (thou knoweſt) that ſuch as a Being is, ſuch will be the actions and operations of it; and therefore, it is neceſſary that thy life and actions be agreeable to thy Being and ſtate, as thou art a Chriſtian; and ſince the eſtate of a Chriſtian is an Holy and Divine eſtate, it is neceſſary that thy life and actions be Holy and Divine, as thy ſtate is. Art thou a Member of Chriſt, ingrafted into his Body, and quickned by his Spirit; and oughteſt thou not to be conformable to Chriſt, and to live the life of Chriſt? Art thou a Child of God, and oughteſt thou not *to be led by the Spirit of God*, [*Rom.* 8. 14.] and to *be a follower or imitator of God* (as the Apoſtle ſaith, *Epheſ.* 5. 1.) in Love and Purity? Art thou an heir of Heaven, (for all the Children of God are Heirs,

Rom.

Rom. 8. 17.) and ought not *thy Converſation to be in Heaven?* Ought not thy Thoughts and Deſires to be upon thine inheritance; and thy Heart and Life to be ſuch as may render thee meet to be a partaker of it, *Coloſſ.* 1. 12? Would'ſt not thou wonder to ſee the pleaſant Vine degenerate into a ſorry Thiſtle, and the fruitful Olive into an unprofitable Bramble? And what doſt thou leſs, if being a Chriſtian thou doſt live like a Heathen, if being in the Spirit thou doſt walk after the Fleſh, and mind the things of the Fleſh? Was it not a moſt dreadful Curſe that drove the great King *Nebuchadnezzar* out of his ſtately Palace into the Fields, amongſt the Beaſts, to eat graſs like the Oxen, *Dan.* 4? And doſt not thou make his Curſe to be thy own choice, when being a Child of God, an Heir of the Kingdom of Heaven, which is more than to be Emperor of the whole Earth, thou doſt ſet thy heart upon this dunghil World, and haſt no eſteem or reliſh of Heavenly things? If with prophane *Eſau*, thou ſelleſt thy Birthright for a meſs of Pottage, and deſpiſing thy Eternal Inheritance, deſireſt to have thy Portion only in this life? The reaſon of all this is plain enough, and I hope, will be readily acknowledged by thee: But however, it is impoſſible but thou muſt confeſs, that thou art obliged to perform thy Promiſes, and to pay thy Vows unto

unto the moſt High; and that, ſince thou haſt given up thy ſelf to God, thou haſt not the leaſt power over thy ſelf, but oughteſt to live altogether to him. If thou haſt an ill opinion of thy Neighbour, and that juſtly, when he is not as good as his word to thee, how can'ſt thou but condemn thy ſelf, when thou breakeſt thy Vows unto the Lord? and if, when any Prophane thing has been offered to God, and conſecrated by Prayer, and Ceremonies, and ſerves to Holy and Divine Adminiſtrations, thou eſteemeſt it as ſeparated from common Uſe, and calleſt it Sacrilege and Prophaneſs to imploy it in common ways; art not thou thy ſelf guilty of the higheſt Sacrilege, when, being Dedicated and Conſecrated to God by Baptiſm, thou doſt withdraw thy ſelf from him, and never imployeſt thy ſelf for him, nor referreſt thy ſelf unto him? The Apoſtle tells us, That *we are not our own, becauſe we are bought with a price* (*i. e.* the Blood of the Son of God) 1 *Cor.* 6. *v.* 19, 20. and I add to it, becauſe we have likewiſe given up our ſelves to him that bought us; and therefore, there is the greateſt reaſon that we ſhould *glorifie him in our Bodies, and our Spirits, which are God's.* It was the Saying of a Devout Man, many years ago, '*That it had been better for us never to have been, than to dwell in our ſelves and to our ſelves*; and we ſhall find it too true

one

one day, if, forgetting our ſtate and Profeſſion, and Obligation as we are Chriſtians, we do live to our ſelves, and not to God. But this leads to a third Conſideration, *viz.*

CHAP. III.

Containing a third Argument to a Holy Life, from the general Conſideration of a future Judgment.

CONſider, that there will a time come, when thou muſt give an exact account of thy life and actions; and it ſhall be known to all the world, how thou haſt demeaned thy ſelf, both as a Man, and Chriſtian. Dear Brother, believeſt thou the Scriptures? I know thou do'ſt, and thou haſt the greateſt reaſon in the world to do ſo. Obſerve therefore what they tell thee concerning that account which thou art to make; and then, conſider whether there be not reaſon enough, why thou ſhould'ſt be careful to lead a Virtuous and Holy Life. It is a mighty encouragement indeed to us in well doing, that our Saviour is to be our Judge; for he, who loved his Enemies ſo as to die for them, will never forget the good works of thoſe whom he does *call his friends*, John 15. 14. but leſt any of us ſhould

ſhould be ſo unwiſe as to make this an Argument for a licentious and careleſs way of living, promiſing our ſelves much favour from him, and an eaſie account at the Day of Judgment; he hath told us frequently, that he purpoſes to proceed ſeverely with us, and to ſhew no favour but what may conſiſt with the exacteſt Juſtice. And it well deſerves our obſervation, that, though he was the mildeſt, and mercifulleſt Perſon alive, and expreſſed the greateſt tenderneſs, and love to ſinful men that ever was, inſomuch that his Enemies caſt it as a reproach upon him, *that he was a friend to Publicans and Sinners*; yet he never ſpake of the Day of Judgment, but with great ſeverity; nor of himſelf, as the Judg of the world, but in ſuch words as altogether exclude that fond partiality which wicked men expect from him at that day. Thus in one place he repreſents himſelf to be an auſtere and hard man, and tells us, *That he expects to reap, where he did not ſow, and to gather where he did not ſtraw*, i. e. He will expect, and require from us (when he comes to Judg us) an Increaſe of thoſe Talents which he hath entruſted us with; and if we have not improved them to his advantage, he will *firſt take them away from us*, and *then caſt us into a Priſon of darkneſs, where ſhall be weeping, and gnaſhing of teeth*; Math. 25, 26, 27. and we may note there,

there, that it is with the *unprofitable Servant*, the Servant that brought him no Increaſe, that he will deal ſo ſeverely; and therefore, how rigorouſly may we believe he will deal with thoſe that do miſpend his Talents, and make no Uſe of them, but to his diſhonour? In the ſame Chapter likewiſe; we find him no leſs ſevere to five fooliſh Virgins, whom he ſhuts for ever out of Heaven, *becauſe they had no oyl with their Lamps, and were not ready exactly at the hour (though it was midnight) to meet the Bridegroom*, v. 12. In another place, he condemns to everlaſting miſery, not only thoſe who accept not his invitation to his Marriage-Feaſt, *but thoſe likewiſe that came to it without wedding garments*, Math. 22. v. 12, 13. and in the 7*th* Chapter of the ſame Goſpel he declares, *That this ſhall be the portion of all the workers of iniquity, though they have called him Lord, and propheſied in his Name, and caſt out Devils, and done many wonderful works*; that is, though they have profeſſed themſelves his Diſciples, and Servants, and done ſome things, which the world accounts great, for his honour, yet he will not own them; and though they make fair Pleas for themſelves, and beg his mercy, and favour, with the greateſt earneſtneſs, and importunity, yet he will have no regard unto them, but baniſh them for ever from him. All this, and much more than this,

this, hath our Bleſſed Saviour told us by way of Parable; and he hath no where encouraged us to hope for any thing more eaſie and favourable, when he ſpeaks plainly of it, and without a Parable. He hath let us know in plain words, that he will judg our works, nay, our very words alſo, and require an account, not only of our filthy and ungodly Speeches, *but of our idle, our vain and unprofitable diſcourſes likewiſe*, Math. 12. 36. v. Nay farther, he hath told us, That the *very thoughts and purpoſes of our hearts ſhall be brought into Judgment; the offending eye, the luſtful, adulterous eye may cauſe the whole body to be caſt into hell; and that a cauſeleſs anger entertained againſt our brethren*, though it ſhew it ſelf neither by words, nor deeds, *will bring us into danger of Condemnation*, Math. 5. 22, 23. Thou wilt think theſe hard Sayings, it may be; and yet there is ſomewhat more to be conſidered, which may make thee think them much harder. Might our Judgment be in private, and our accounts be made between God, and our ſelves only, we might, perhaps, notwithſtanding all that which hath been ſaid, look upon it as tolerable. But, alas! we are told, that it muſt be publick, (without any regard to our modeſty) and before all the world; that *the very Secrets of our hearts ſhall be diſcloſed before men and Angels; that the hidden things of dark-*

darkneſs ſhall be brought to light (as one tels us who well knew the mind of Chriſt, 1. Cor. 4. 5.) and *all our counſels be made manifeſt.* And further, that this ſhall be at *a time when* (perhaps) *we did not look for it*, at *midnight* or at *Cocks-crowing*; that we may be hurried away to Chriſts Judgment-Seat, before we can trim our lamps, or make ready our accounts, or think what courſe to take to approve our ſelves to our Judg and Lord. *We may be Eating and Drinking, or Buying and Selling, or Planting and Building (as the people were in the Old World when the Flood came and Swept them all away) and the Son of man ſhall be revealed from Heaven*, and *we ſhall be taken as in a Snare*, we ſhall not be able to flee away from him, nor to ſtand before him, becauſe we are not prepared and ready for him. See *Luke* 17. *v.* 26, 27, 28. Nay yet further, his Coming, we are told, will be with ſo much Majeſty and Glory, there ſhall ſo many dreadful things go before it, and ſo much terror accompany it, that, we ſhall be utterly confounded, and not able to lift up our Heads, if clear and good conſciences, and juſt and right accounts prepared, and made ready before hand, do not give us ſome confidence and aſſurance before him: *The Heaven ſhall paſs away with a great noyſe, and the Elements ſhall melt with fervent*

heat, and the Earth and all the works that are therein ſhall be burnt up. 2. *Pet.* 3. 10. and then *ſhall the Lord Jeſus deſcend from heaven with a ſhout, with the voice of the Archangel, and the Trump of God.* 1. *Theſſ.* 4. 16. and all *the Nations and kindreds of the Earth, and thoſe that are in their Graves ſhall hear his voice,* John 5. 28. and behold his Glory, the *Glory of the King of Kings, and of the Lord of Lords; who treadeth the winepreſs of the fierceneſs, and wrath of Almighty God.* Rev. 19. 15, and 16. O dear Chriſtian Brother, what wilt thou do in that day? and what ſhall I do who now ask thee the Queſtion? how ſhall we be able to bear the ſight of ſo great Majeſty, and Glory? how ſhall we have the courage to appear before it? what dread, what horror will poſſeſs our ſouls? what confuſion will cover our faces? how ſhall we tremble, when we think of our trial before that impartial and dreadfull bar? and how will our hearts ſink within us, when we are called to anſwer for ourſelves? O Brother, what will a good conſcience, thinkeſt thou, be worth at that day? what wouldeſt thou then give for a pure and unſpotted life, to preſent before the juſt Judg of Heaven and Earth? for as great a number of good works, as thou haſt of ſins, and rebellions and provocations? whatever thou thinkeſt of a good life now, believe it, thou wilt then think well

well of it; and happy, thrice happy, ſhalt thou be, if thy own heart condemn thee not of wickedneſs and impiety. Whether it will do ſo or not, I am not able to tell thee, but this I can aſſure thee, that no tongue is able to expreſs the Amazement, the Conſternation, the Horror, and Anguiſh, the Perplexity that ſhall poſſeſs and overwhelm thee, if it do condemne thee. Thou wilt not know what courſe to take, which way to look, nor whether to betake thy ſelf; to avoid the Judgment will be impoſſible, and to bear it thou wilt not be able: if thou calleſt for mercy thou ſhalt find none; if thou deſireſt death, thy deſire will not be granted; if thou calleſt to the Hills to cover thee, they ſhall be deaf unto thee: all hope, all comfort ſhall utterly forſake thee, and thou muſt ſtand at the dreadful tribunal as a deſperate and helpleſs wretch, till thou heareſt that dreadful and irrevocable ſentence, *Depart from me ye curſed into everlaſting fire, prepared for the Devil, and his Angels.* And now Brother, tell me, I beſeech thee, what thoughts thou haſt of a Holy Life? is there any reaſon why thou ſhouldeſt be carefull to lead ſuch a life, or not? doſt thou think, that thou can'ſt avoid this dreadful account we have ſpoken of? or doſt thou hope, that an account made according to that careleſs, and carnal way of living which we ſee moſt men live, will paſs at that

Juſt tribunal; and be accepted of as good? can'ſt thou have the face to make before God, and all the world, ſuch a declaration as this? God gave me an excellent Being, I acknowledg, 'and appointed me an excellent end; but I 'neither conſidered the one, nor thought up-'on the other: God made me capable to know 'him, to love him, and worſhip and ſerve him; 'and I was frequently told, that the main bu-'ſineſs of my life was to do thus; but this I ne-'ver intended nor deſigned, or if I did, it was but 'by the by, and when I had nothing elſe to 'do: I cannot deny but I was capable of 'bringing my Maker a great Increaſe of Glory, 'by the Uſe and improvement of thoſe excel-'lent faculties he beſtowed upon me; but the 'luſts and and appetites of the fleſh, and the 'pleaſures of providing for, and ſatisfying 'them, made me forget my ſelf and the honor 'of him that made me. I muſt needs ac-'knowledg likewiſe, that it was not ordinary 'Grace which called me to the knowledg of 'Chriſt, and that I thought my ſelf partaker 'of no little honor and advantage by it; but 'whether my Chriſtianity laid any other ob-'ligations vpon me than the bearing the Name 'of a Chriſtian, I could never find time to 'conſider, nor think it worth while to enquire: 'I thought better of my ſelf indeed than of o-'ther men, for my being a Chriſtian; but

that

'that I have lived better than they, that I have 'been more mindful of God, and more pro- 'fitable to men, I am not able to say: I have 'talked much of Heaven, but I ever loved 'the World before it; and though I professed 'great love to Christ, yet my main business 'has always been to please my self. I know thou wilt cry out upon this, as most absurd and unreasonable, and conclude it impossible any person should find mercy at that great day, that can speak nothing better for himself; and yet I defie all our Common careless Christians, to make any better plea for themselves, or to give any account of themselves, and those talents that God hath intrusted them with, which may be judged more tolerable, or more likely to be accepted. Hast thou a son or servant, whom thou hast bestowed great cost upon, to fit him for doing thee some considerable, and important service; and hast thou committed it to his care and charge, given him a competent time, and furnished him with all necessaries and requisites for the doing it; and that Son or Servant after his time expired returns to give thee such an account as this? 'Soe much of my time 'I spent in eating and drinking, in revelling 'and rioting, in singing and danceing, in 'courting and sporting, about which all my 'thoughts and all my care were wholly taken

'up; and as for the great buſineſs thou com-
'manded'ſt me to do, I never thought upon it,
'or not till it was too late, when I had nei-
'ther time, nor other requiſites remaining to
effect it. Would not ſuch a Son or Servant
vex thee to the heart? and wouldeſt not thou
think him worthy of the greateſt ſhame and
puniſhment? Remember, Brother, that it will
be thy own caſe, if neglecting the great end
of thy Life and Being, and the indiſpenſible
obligations of thy moſt Holy Religion,
thou can'ſt only reckon at the great day thy
getting of mony, or thy ſpending it to the
ſatisfaction of thy beaſtly luſts and appetites.
But this ſhall lead me to another Conſide-
ration. *viz.*

CHAP. IV.

Containing a fourth Argument to a Holy Life, the conſideration of the future puniſhments of Wicked men, viz. *that their Torments are Extreme and intolerable, without ceaſing, and without end.*

COnſider the puniſhments which Almigh-
ty God hath prepared for thoſe unfaith-
ful men, who will not be able to ſtand in that
Judgment, but muſt fall under the dreadful
ſen-

ſentence of condemnation. And that thou may'ſt know how great thoſe puniſhments will be, thou wilt do well to call to mind what puniſhments God hath often inflicted upon wicked men in this world. I omit the effects of Adams ſin and diſobedience, which the whole World ſtill labours under, as alſo the fruits of our own ſins, which perhaps we have more than once ſmarted for: let it be remembred how God deſtroyed all mankind except eight perſons, with a flood of water, for their ſins, *Gen.* 7. How he overthrew Five Cities with Fire and Brimſtone for their Filthyneſs and Impiety, *Gen.* 19. How he deſtroyed his own people, for whom he had wrought many wonders in the Wilderneſs, when they would not obey his voice, *cauſing three and twenty thouſand of them to fall in one day*, 1 Cor, 10. and 8. How he gave Commandment utterly to deſtroy the Amalekites, and not to ſpare their ſucking children, for a ſin committed by their Fathers Four Hundred years before: and in a word, how he gave up his own once beloved people and their City and Country, to the moſt lamentable ruine and deſolation that ever was; and how their poſterity are ſcattered to this day over the face of the whole earth, and hated of all people, bearing the ſin and curſe of their Forefathers. *His bloud be upon us, and*

our children, Math. 27. 25. These are great demonstrations of Gods hatred against sin, and from these we do learn, That those Punishments which are appointed for wicked men in another World, must needs be very grievous, and such as will make them extreamly miserable. For, as the Scriptures tell us, This is the time of Gods patience, and forbearance and goodness towards sinners, *Rom.* 2. 4. and if in this time he shews so much severity, how severe may we believe he will be, when this time of his goodness is ended, and when the day of his wrath, as the Scripture calls it, is come; that day of justice without mercy, of vengeance without pity, of execution without further patience and forbearance: when all the wrath that wicked men have deserved, and have treasured up against themselves, shall fall upon their guilty Souls, and God shall as designedly magnify his impartial Justice in their torment and misery, as he will magnify his mercy and goodness in the glory and felicity of his faithful Servants? But we have yet a better way of learning how great the punishments of the Damned shall be, and that is, by considering what the Scriptures have told us in plain words concerning them; they are such punishments, our Blessed Saviour tels us, as *are prepared for the* Devil *and his Angels* Math. 25. *v.* 41. that is, for the very

very worſt of Beings, for the greateſt rebels againſt Heaven, and the moſt irreconcileable adverſaries to all manner of goodneſs; and therefore, we may be ſure that they are as great as we can imagine them to be, not to ſay that they are as great as an Almighty God can make them. They are puniſhments by fire, as he alſo tels us, which is the moſt rageing, the moſt devouring and Tormenting thing we know in the World: and that fire is repreſented to be ſuch as our Nature do's moſt abhor, and muſt needs be moſt inſufferable, *viz. A Fire with Brimſtone*, the Stench of which is as intolerable as the Heat, and which ſuffocates as well as conſumes, *Rev.* 21. *v.* 8. of this Fire, we are told likewiſe, *There is a Bottomleſs Lake or Pit.* Rev. 20. *v.* 3. into which there ſhall never enter the leaſt Light, *the very Blackneſs of Darkneſs*, as *St. Judes* expreſſions are, *v.* 17. lying upon it for ever. In this Lake, we are told, the damned ſhall be cloſe Priſoners, *bound Hand and Foot*, Mat. 22. *v.* 13. without poſſibility of eſcaping, or ſomuch as removeing from one place to another for the gaining of the leaſt eaſe; and in this Priſon, we are told, the Torments will be ſuch as will cauſe *Weeping*, and *Wailing*, and *Gnaſhing* of *Teeth*, nay, Yellings and Howlings, and Shriekings, *like the Shriek-*

Shrieking of the Children frying in the fire in the Valley of Hinnom. 2 King. 23. *v.* 10. which the word uſed by our Bleſſed Saviour for Hell, *Math*, 5. *v.* 29, 30. doth imply; and theſe Torments, and Wailings, and Heart-breaking Cries ſhall continue, not for a Moneth, or a Year, or an Age, but for ever and ever. *The fire ſhall never be quenched*, Mark 9. *v.* 44. *the ſmoak of their Torment is ever to aſcend*, Rev. 14. *v.* 10, 11. and they *ſhall find no reſt night nor day.* This is a little, and but a little of what the Scripture tels us, of the puniſhments of the damned; but in this little there are ſo many dreadful things implyed, that he muſt be bold and hardned even to a wonder, that is not affrighted with them. for,

1. It is plain, that the puniſhments are ſuch as will Torment the whole Man, Body and Soul, with all their faculties and powers, and that in the Extreameſt manner. There ſhall not be a member of the Body, nor any faculty in the Soul, but ſhall have its Torment in one and the ſame inſtant, and that Torment ſhall be ſo great that no words can expreſs it, nor heart can conceive it. How can it be otherwiſe, doſt thou think, in a Lake of Fire and Brimſtone? what Member of the Body will not be ſcorched? what ſenſe will not be afflicted? what faculty

culty will not be Tormented? The laſcivious Eyes will be plagued with darkneſs, and the ugly and fearful ſight of Devils and Damned Spirits: the nice Smell, with the loathſome ſtench of Brimſtone, and all the moſt abominable Filthyneſs: the delicate Ears with the ſhrieks and howlings of Tormenting, and Tormented wretches: the dainty Taſte, with the moſt Ravenous Hunger and Thirſt; and all the ſenſible parts, with burning and devouring fire: the Imagination will have its Torment, by the apprehenſion of preſent pains, and of thoſe that are to come: the Memory by its remembrance of pleaſures paſt, and gone, and never to returne again: the Underſtanding by the Conſideration of the Happineſs loſt, and the miſery now come on. And if there be any other part which can be Tormented, it ſhall have its Torment with no more favour than the reſt. O, dear Chriſtian Brother, what ſad and dreadful things are theſe? and how unſpeakably miſerable muſt thoſe be who muſt endure them? and yet this is not all; for it is certain in the ſecond place.

2. That theſe Torments ſhall always continue without any the leaſt intermiſſion or decreaſe, and thoſe that ſuffer them ſhall never find the leaſt eaſe, nor help, nor comfort; no, not for one minute: This is no more than

than is implyed in the places of Scripture before mentioned; the Fire will be always burning, the ſmoak ever aſcending, ſo that there ſhall be no reſt day nor night, and thoſe that are bound hand and foot will not be able to eſcape or to reſiſt, or ſtrive againſt the Torments, but muſt lye ſtill, and ſuffer all. Thus it was with the rich man, of whom our Bleſſed Saviour tels us, *Luke*, 16. that being in Hell, Tormented with the Fire which ſhall not be quenched, he made this requeſt to Abraham, *Father Abraham have mercy on me, and ſend Lazarus, that he* may *dip the tip of his finger in Water and cool my Tongue, for I am Tormented in this Flame. v*, 24. What ſmaller requeſt could he poſſibly make? he deſired not a cup of water, no, nor as much as Lazarus might have held in the palm of his hand, nor yet ſo much as might have ſtuck to his whole finger: he only deſired a drop from the verp tip of it, or not ſo much only that he *would touch his Tongue with the tip of his finger* a little moiſtned and cooled with water; and yet this ſmall requeſt would not be granted him; that little, that very little eaſe, which ſo ſmall a favour would have given him, was denyed him. Which ſad ſtory plainly ſhews us, that the Torments of the wicked have no intermiſſion, nor decreaſe, and that thoſe who

who ſuffer them, ſhall never obtain the leaſt help or eaſe, though they want it moſt extremely, and ſeek for it with the greateſt earneſtneſs, and importunity. They ſhall be like to a man, that is almoſt drown'd in the mid'ſt of the Sea, who not finding any firme ground whereupon to ſet his feet, ſtretches out his hand every way, and graſpes at ſomething with all his Might, but ſtill in vain, becauſe there is nothing but water round about him: thus will it be with thoſe wretches in Hell; they are drowning in a bottomleſs gulf of unſpeakable miſeries, and they look every way for help, and ſtrive for a little eaſe; but alas to no purpoſe, for there is nothing but ſorrow, and miſery, and pain, and horror, round about them. And thus it ſhall be with them, not for a little time, for a Moneth, or a Year, but for ever and ever, which is a third thing I deſire thee to obſerve.

3. Their pains and Torments will be endleſs as well as eaſleſs, and when they have endured them without any intermiſſion, or decreaſe, as many Years, nay Ages as there are Stares in the Firmament, or ſands upon the Sea-ſhore, they ſhall ſtill be to endure them, in the very ſame manner, as many more; as many more did I ſay? yea ten thouſand more; they ſhall endure them as

as long as there is a juſt and Holy God to Puniſh them, that is, to eternal ages. This is but what God himſelf hath told us in plain words; for thus ſhall the ſad ſentence run at the great day, *Depart from me ye Curſed, into everlaſting Fire*; and the execution will be accordingly, as we are told, Math. 25. the laſt v. *The wicked ſhall go into everlaſting Puniſhment*; into Puniſhment that ſhall be as laſting as the rewards of the Righteous, which will be as laſting as God himſelf.

Theſe are dreadful conſiderations, my Dear Chriſtian Brother, and he muſt be a ſtrange kind of man indeed, and have a heart harder than the Adamant, that is not mightily affected with them. There are but few men ſo hardy as to think upon the Plagues, and Judgments of Almighty God upon ſinful men in this World, without ſome fear, eſpecially when they think of them as hanging over their own heads, and apprehend themſelves to be in danger of them; and how then can they chuſe but tremble at thoſe of another World, which are infinitly more dreadful than the worſt of theſe? The Evils of the World are Particular Evils, they afflict but one, or ſome few parts at once; one diſeaſe ſeizes upon one part, and another upon another part; in

in one diſeaſe one ſenſe is pained, and in another, another ſenſe, but never are all the parts and all the ſenſes, at one and the ſame time, under Torment and pain. In this World there is no Evil ſo great, but it hath its decreaſes, and changes, and therefore no man can be ſo miſerable but he will ſometimes have ſome reſpite and eaſe: and let the Evil be never ſo ſharp and preſſing, yet the comfort of hope will not be wanting, and the foreſight of a certain end will be a great releif: and yet notwithſtanding this, we many times think the Evils of this World to be intolerable; and, as ſweet a thing as Life is to us, we wiſh for Death to deliver us from them. O how intolerable then muſt the Torments of the other World be, which ſpare no part, or faculty of Body or Soul, which give not the leaſt eaſe, nor admit of the leaſt decreaſe, no not for one minute; which exclude all hope of an end, and overwhelm the Soul to utter diſpair of the leaſt remedy! Let our charity lead us ſomtimes to viſite a poor Sick Creature, and let us obſerve what pains and agonies he endures for one night: mark how often he toſſes and tumbles from one ſide of hi Bed to the other; hear how he groans, and what bitter complaints he makes: obſerve how he counts the hours of the Clock, and how

how long he thinks each hour to be: how paſſionately he wiſhes for the Dawning of the day, and how tedious the night ſeems unto him. This we look upon as a ſad ſpectacle, and if we have any bowels in us, they cannot but melt at it, and when we conſider that it may be ſhortly our own caſe, we are very ſenſibly touched with it. O what ſhall we think then of the condition of the Damned! how deplorable and how miſerable muſt we needs believe that to be? to be Tormented in every member of the Body, and every faculty of the Soul, with the ſharpeſt and moſt exquiſit Torments, and without the leaſt eaſe or reſpit; and this not for a night of ſome few hours, but for an everlaſting night, a night that has no morning, and knows no hope of any Dawning of the day: to lie in ſuch a night, not upon a ſoft Bed (as the Sick man do's) but in a Bed of Flames or a hot burning furnace; not at liberty to turn to and fro, and to ſeek eaſe, but bound hand and foot; not with the company of compaſſionate friends aſſiſting and comforting to the beſt of their power, but with the horrid company of the damned and accurſed Spirits, that ſhall add to their ſufferings and their ſorrows, as much as their power and malice can poſſibly do. This muſt be miſery in the height, in its full per-

perfection, if I may ſo ſpeak; who trembles not to think of it? who will not do any thing to eſcape it? do we fear Sickneſs and pain here; and do not we fear the pains of Hell much more? do we dread a priſon and fly from fetters and chains, and hazard our very lives to preſerve our liberty; and are we not as much afraid of that Eternal priſon, whoſe gates ſhall never be opened when once they are ſhut upon us, and from which there can be no redemption or deliverance? O dear Chriſtian Brother, are we in our right ſenſes or not? doſt thou think, and do we underſtand what theſe things mean? do they belong to us, or are they meant only for others? do we take them for the never failing truths of God or for the fables and fancies of brain-ſick men? if we underſtand them not, if we believe them not, why do we call our ſelves Chriſtians, and make an outward profeſſion of that which in our hearts we approve not of? but if we underſtand and believe theſe things, why do we not tremble at the thoughts of them? why do we not bethink our ſelves how we may eſcape them? why do we not abhor that Sin and wickedneſs which will bring us to them? why do we not apply our ſelves with all our might, and all our care, to the Practice of that Piety and Virtue, which a-

lone through Gods mercy, can deliver us from them? It is an amazing thing my Brother, that theſe things ſhould make ſo little impreſſion upon the generality of Men, as we find they do; and, but that the Scripture tels us of a God of this World, that blinds the Eyes, and hardens the Hearts of Men, and makes them inconſiderate as Brutes, we ſhould be at a loſs to give any account of it. We ſee, that they are apprehenſive enough of Evil in this World, and induſtrious enough to avoid it; if any Evil be great, though it be remote, they dread it, and though it's Coming be uncertain, yet they take care to prevent it. But alas! as to theſe unſpeakable Evils and Calamities, they are ſtupid and inconſiderate as blocks, the leaſt fear of them is full enough, and the leaſt care and pains to avoid them is thought too much. Surely Brother, there was a time when they had greater effects upon the world, than now they have, when men thought they could not be poſſeſſed with too great fear of them, nor take too much care and pains to eſcape them. Let me ſhew thee what a devout Father has written concerning ſome penitents he once ſaw in a Monaſtery, and then judge what influence theſe things have had heretofore upon men, and what

St. 7. Climac. 9.

what they ought in reaſon to have now. ‘ When Firſt I came into this Monaſtery ‘ (ſaies he) I beheld certain things which ‘ neither the eyes of the ſluggard have ever ‘ ſeen, nor the ears of the negligent heard, ‘ nor yet may it be conceiv'd in the heart of ‘ any careleſs and retchleſs Chriſtians. And ‘ afterwards he tels us, how he ſaw many ‘ penitents ſtanding with their eyes fixed ‘ towards Heaven, continually calling upon ‘ Almighty God with tears and ſighs for ‘ pardon and mercy: others again, he ſaw, ‘ that profeſſed they were not worthy to ‘ lift up their eyes towards Heaven, or to ‘ ſpeak to Almighty God, and theſe held ‘ their faces down towards the ground, of- ‘ fering their Souls in ſilence to the mercy ‘ of God, without ſpeaking ſo much as one ‘ word, as men that had been Dumb, full ‘ of fear and confuſion. Others were cloath- ‘ ed in Sacks, and Hair-cloath, and kneeling ‘ with their faces bowed down to their knees, ‘ and ſmiteing their foreheads oftentimes ‘ upon the Earth; did bathe the very Earth ‘ with their tears, and thoſe, that wanted ‘ tears did lament very grievouſly, becauſe ‘ they wanted them. And after this, he ‘ tells us, that they had death continually ‘ before their eyes; and ſpeaking one to o- ‘ nother they ſaid, How think ye Brethren?

'what ſhall become of us at the dreadful 'hour? ſhall the ſentence of Condemnati-'on be revoked? or ſhall our Prayers per-'chance come into our Lords Ears? or if 'they do, how ſhall they be received? and 'what profit ſhall we receive by them? for 'ſince they proceed out of ſuch unclean 'Lips, it is to be feared, they may find but 'little favour in his ſight. And much more 'to this purpoſe. To which others would 'anſwer, as the penitent ſinners in *Nineve*, 'Who knows whether the Lord will Par-'don us, whether he will turn himſelf to 'us, and not ſuffer us to periſh: let us now 'take Courage and perſevere continually in 'Crying unto him till the end; for the Lord 'is merciful, and will be pacified with per-'ſeverance: let us run, my Brethren, let us 'run with all ſpeed, and return to the place 'from whence we are fallen, and let us in no 'wiſe pardon this filthy fleſh which hath un-'done us; but ſince it hath Crucified us, let us Crucifie it. And then, he proceeds to tel us how hardly they treated their Bodies, how they watched, and faſted, and puniſhed themſelves for their offences againſt God, inſomuch as that their faces were like 'the faces of dead men, and their very Eyes 'were ſunck into their heads through over 'much weakneſs. And after all this he tels us how

how they behaved themſelves when any of their Brethren lay a dying. They compaſſed the Bed of the dying Man, and with earneſt, and vehement requeſts, with moveing countenances and pitiful words they demanded of him, How do'ſt thou Brother? how feeleſt thou thy ſelf? what Hope haſt thou? what ſhall become of thee? haſt thou obtained thy long ſuit? Art thou arrived at the Haven of thy Salvation? haſt thou received any earneſt-penny of thy ſecurity? haſt thou heard any voice within thee, which ſaid, thy ſins be forgiven thee, or thy faith hath made the whole? or haſt thou peradventure heard any other voice which ſaid unto thee. The wicked ſhall be turned into Hell, and all the nations that forget God, or, Bind him Hand and Foot and caſt him into utter Darkneſs? What anſwer makeſt thou, good Brother, unto us? Tel us ſomething, we beſeech thee, that we may underſtand by thee, what is reſerved for us; for thy ſuite is now come to an end, and what ſentence thou ſhalt now receive ſhall never more be reverſed: but our caſe as yet ſtil dependeth, and looketh for ſentence. To which demands ſome anſwered. Bleſſed be the Lord that hath not ſuffered us to be caſt into the teeth of our enemies: but others

'after a more doleful manner; Miſerable is 'that Soul that hath not fully obſerved his 'profeſſion, for now ſhall he well underſtand 'what is prepared for him. Theſe, my dear Brother, were men that did in good earneſt believe the Truths of the Goſpel concerning another World, and being fully perſwaded that the puniſhments appointed for wicked men are moſt intolerable, were as fully reſolved to deliver themſelves from them, though by the greateſt pains and the ſevereſt mortifications. Theſe were men that made Uſe of that Faith, and of that Reaſon and Underſtanding which God hath given them; and ſince they thought it Prudence to be apprehenſive of leſſer Dangers, and to prepare againſt more inconſiderable Evils; they would not, like the unruly Horſe that ſtarts at a Bird, and runs himſelf into a Precipice, be fearleſs of the greateſt Dangers, and ſuffer themſelves to fall into the moſt inſufferable Calamities. And are not we concern'd, my Brother, to do the like, and to make the like Uſe of that Faith, and Reaſon which God hath given us? D'os not the Fire of Hell burn as furiouſly now as ever it did? Have thoſe everlaſting Torments had any end or period preſcribed them ſince that time? or are we more able to wreſtle with them, or to endure them, than they were? or have we

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any easier way of escaping them discovered to us, than was known to them? what easie wayes our Lusts may find out, I do not know; but sure I am, that there is but one safe and sure way, but one way of Gods appointment, which was made known to them, as it is to us, and that is, the way of serving God sincerely, and with all our might, in a Holy and Vertuous Life; which if we fail to do, we shall, as certainly as God is true, be condemned to these everlasting Torments. Judg then, dear Brother, whether we have not reason to serve God, and whether it be not madness to live in that careless and ungodly way which we see most men do. But now because these things may seem very severe, and possibly occation in thee some hard thoughts of Almighty God, I must desire thee to consider,

CHAP. V.

Sect. 1.

Containing a Fifth Argument to a Holy Life, from the Conſideration of thoſe great Rewards God hath prepared for good Men in the other World, the greatneſs of which may be in ſome meaſure eſtimated, 1. *From Gods Kindneſs to Good Men even in this World.* 2. *That the Reward is not proportioned to our deſerts, which are very little, but to the goodneſs of God, which is infinite. And* 3. *Is deſigned as the moſt glorious manifeſtation of the Divine Goodneſs; And* 4. *It is the Purchaſe of Chriſt's Blood, and the Reward of his Obedience and Sufferings, which are of Infinite Merit.*

THE Reward, which Almighty God hath prepared in another World for thoſe, that ſerve him faithfully in this, according to thoſe Obligations that lye upon them, both as Men and Chriſtians. And this Conſideration, I doubt not, will be as Pleaſant, and Delightful, as the laſt was Sad, and Dreadful; and will no leſs declare Gods Goodneſs and Mercy, than that did his Juſtice and Severity. I preſume, I need not tell

tell thee, that ſuch is our condition, that no Reward of right does belong to any Services we can do; and therefore be the Rewad great, or little, which God hath prepared for us, we muſt acknowledg our ſelves indebted to his Infinite Goodneſs for it, and that it is on our parts altogether undeſerved; how much more then muſt we acknowledg our ſelves indebted to his Goodneſs, (and what a ſtrong obligation ſhould we reckon it to his Service) when the Reward he hath deſigned for us, is not little, like our Services; but great, great, as we can imagine it to be, as our hearts can deſire it ſhould be? To give thee a little ſight of the greatneſs of this Reward, for it is not poſſible for thee, or me, to comprehend it fully, I might lead thee through a multitude of Conſiderations; but I ſhall reſtrain my ſelf to ſome few, which I think do deſerve thy ſerious regard. And

1. We cannot but acknowledge, that Almighty God is very kind to his Servants in this World, and there is not one of them can ſay that he ſerveth God for nought, as to this preſent life. God hath given them many good Promiſes, and do's give them many good things daily according to thoſe Promiſes. They have a competent ſhare in all the good things of the World, and ſuch a bleſſing together with them, as makes them much

much more ſweet and pleaſant to them, than all the poſſeſſions of the wicked; and though they have their Afflictions, and their Tryals, yet they have their Pleaſures and their Comforts; they have a Peace within which none can diſturb, and ſuch Joyes as none can take from them, I mean the peace of their Conſciences, and the joyes of the Holy Ghoſt; they are either free from all Calamities, or they have ſuch ſupport under them, that they are rather matter of Joy than Sorrow to them: God is good to them at all times in a great meaſure, but ſometimes more abundantly, and in a meaſure extraordinary; witneſs the great things that he hath done in all Ages for them; What great Deliverances hath he often given them? What cunning Plots and Devices againſt them hath he brought to naught? What Wonders hath he wrought in their behalf? and, how Miraculouſly, when they have been in their greateſt Diſtreſs, has he made them to triumph over all their Enemies? So that, thoſe who have beheld it, have been conſtrain'd to cry out in the words of the Pſalmiſt, *Verily there is a reward for the righteous, doubtleſs there is a God that judgeth the Earth*, Pſal. 58. 11. Now if God deal thus kindly with his Servants here, what kindneſs do'ſt thou think will he ſhew them hereafter? If whileſt they

they are in doing his work, he beſtows ſo many good things upon them, what may they expect from him when his work is done? and if in the time of their tryal they receive ſuch great benefits from him, what ſhall they receive (thinkeſt thou) when their tryal is ended, and they are fully approved? If ſuch great things be done for their encouragement in his Service, what great things are deſigned (may we believe) for their Reward? Eſpecially conſidering,

2. That the Reward, which God intends for them, ſhall not be proportioned to the little Merit of their Services, but to his own Infinite Goodneſs: it ſhall not be ſuch as the Services do deſerve, but ſuch as becomes him to beſtow. It is a *Gift*, as the Apoſtle tells us, *Rom.* 6. 23. and ſuch a gift as ſhall ſhew the Infinite Goodneſs and Beneficence of the Donor. Yea

3. It is a gift, that is deſigned for to ſhew it. God intends the fulleſt manifeſtation of his Goodneſs by it, that he may receive Everlaſting Praiſes, both from Men, and Angels. And how exceeding great muſt that gift be? When a Prince rewards the Services of a poor Subject, he conſiders not ſo much what his Loyal Subject deſerves, as what becomes

comes himſelf to beſtow; and though the ſervice may be but mean, yet he muſt give as a Prince, largely and freely, with reſpect to his Honour: but if a Prince deſign in rewarding a Servant to ſhew his Magnificence, and Liberality to the utmoſt, and to do himſelf the greateſt honour he can, he will give the greateſt things his Kingdom will afford; and in the nobleſt and moſt honourable way. O how great then and how good will that Reward be which the King of Kings, the Supream Ruler and Governor of the World will give to his Faithful Servants? How little leſs than Infinite muſt that be, which will become ſo Glorious a Majeſty to beſtow? Eſpecially ſince he deſigns to manifeſt his Goodneſs and Bounty in the higheſt meaſure? and to let all the World know, how much he deſerved the love and ſervice of all his Creatures. When God before the foundations of the World, did deſign to declare his Power and Wiſdom and Goodneſs, what a World did he create? What Beautiful Heavens? what glittering Stars? what Elements? and in how marvellous a manner did he unite, and compact them together? and yet he intended this Vaſt, and Beautiful Building, to laſt but for a time, and then to be deſtroyed; and he knew that the nobleſt of his Creatures, which he

he made to inhabit it, would be rebellious againſt him, and few of them give him his due honour and obedience. Imagine then what he will do, when he deſigns the utmoſt manifeſtation of his Almighty Goodneſs, in rewarding his Faithful Servants: what a Glorious Place will he make for them? what Riches and Honors will he confer upon them? will they not be as great, as his Infinite Goodneſs can beſtow, or as his Infinite Wiſedom can judge to be becoming it? and how incomparably great muſt we needs judg thoſe to be? And yet we may Conſider further,

4. That this Reward deſigned for Gods Servants, is that, which Chriſt hath received from his Father, to give them, for all his pains and tears and ſweat and blood: that it is the Purchaſe of the Blood of the Son of God, and the recompence of his Obedience to the death. Now how great a Reward muſt ſo Beloved a Son deſerve by ſo great and perfect an Obedience? Can any thing, how excellent ſoever, be thought too good for him, or too great a recompence for his Sufferings? if, conſidering our own poor ſervices we could not hope for ſuch manifeſtations of Gods Goodneſs as I have ſpoken of, yet conſidering the Merits of Chriſt, we have

no

no reaſon to doubt of them; for if Infinite Goodneſs can admit of any motive to ſhew it ſelf to the utmoſt, this muſt needs be the greateſt, and moſt prevailing. And yet further, to raiſe our Thoughts one degree higher, we may conſider,

SECT. 2.

Containing a proſecution of the ſame Arguments, That this Reward of Good Men muſt be very great; Becauſe, 5. It is not only the Reward Chriſt purchaſed for his Diſciples, but that alſo which he obtained for himſelf, as the Recompence of his Obedience and Sufferings, with a more particular Explication, wherein this Happineſs conſiſts; a Serious Expoſtulation with thoſe, who ſlight it, and the neceſſity of Holineſs for the obtaining of it.

5. THis Reward is not only as the Reward which Chriſt obtained for his Servants, but as the Reward which he obtained for himſelf, as the very Recompence which his Heavenly Father hath given him, for his Obedience; for that it is the very ſame Reward which he has received, that his Servants ſhall enjoy, the Scriptures teach us plainly. We learn it from his own Mouth,

Matth.

Matth. 25. 21. where he bids the faithful Servant, that had improved his Talents to his advantage, *to enter into the joy of his Lord*; and one of his choſen Servants, that knew as much of this matter as any man ever did, hath told us the ſame, *Rom.* 8. 17. where he expreſly affirms, *that we are heirs of God, and co-heirs with Chriſt Jeſus*, So that whatever glory, or joy, or riches, or honours Chriſt is poſſeſſed of upon the account of his Obedience, that ſhall all his faithful Servants enjoy together with him. Has God exalted him for his Obedience, and given him a Kingdom above all Kingdoms? it is as certain, that his Servants ſhall be exalted likewiſe, and *reign together with him*, 2 *Tim.* 2. 12. & *Rev.* 22. 5. Is Chriſt aſcended into the higheſt Heavens, and do's he dwell in the Boſome of his Father? it is as certain, that he ſhall come one day from Heaven, and receive all his Servants to himſelf, *that where he is, they may be alſo*, Joh. 14. 3. Is that frail and mortal body, which he had whil'ſt he was upon the Earth, and which ſuffered the Pains and Torments of the Croſs, changed into a glorious, immortal, impaſſible Body? it is as certain, *that the vile bodies of his* Servants, *ſhall be ſo changed likewiſe, and faſhioned like to his glorious Body, according to the working whereby he is able to ſubdue all things*

to

to himself, Phil. 3. 21. Is that Glory, which he is exalted to, that Joy and Happiness, which he is possessed of, never to have an end? it is as certain, that the Glory and Felicity of his Servants shall be as lasting; for *it is an Inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away*, 1 Peter, *c.* 1. *v.* 4. This, dear Brother, is the reward of Gods Faithful Servants; and can thy Heart conceive any thing greater, or thy Soul wish for any thing more? Canst thou conceive what it is to put off this vile mortal body, with all its Evil affections, and uneasie attendants, to be freed from all defects and imperfections, from all diseases and distempers, all infirmities and deformities; to be like to the Angels in Heaven, and having put on incorruption and immortality, to shine like the Sun in the Firmament, in the Kingdom of God? Canst thou conceive what a happiness it will be, to be with Christ, to behold the blessed face of that Dear Person, who do's so highly deserve of us, both upon the score of his Infinite Perfections, and likewise upon the account of his Inestimable Benefits? Canst thou conceive what a happiness it will be to *behold God face to face*, as St. *Paul*'s expressions are, 1 *Cor.* 13. 12. or *to see him as he is*, as St. *John* expresses it, 1 *Joh.* 3. 2. that is, to have the most clear, and comprehensive

henſive knowledg of him, that finite Creatures can poſſibly have: to know all his adorable Perfections, his Almighty Power, his Incomprehenſible Wiſdom, his Eternal Juſtice, his reſplendent Purity and Holineſs, his Immeaſureable Goodneſs and Love; and to feel the mighty power of this knowledg upon our Souls transforming us into the likeneſs of God, and uniting our Wills moſt perfectly to him, whereby we ſhall both poſſeſs God, and be poſſeſſed of him? Can'ſt thou conceive what a happineſs it will be, for Millions of Millions of ſuch God-like Creatures to be inſeparably together, and with united Hearts and Mouths to be continually ſinging Songs of Praiſe to the great God of Love, who loved them Infinitely, and taught them to love him again, and one another? And can'ſt thou think how much it will add to their Happineſs, to have a full and perfect aſſurance, That it ſhall never have an end; that it ſhall be as laſting as 'tis great, and never know the leaſt diminution, or decay? I know, Brother, that all this is far above the Reach of thy moſt raiſed thoughts; it is too great a happineſs to enter into the heart of Man: as *fleſh and blood cannot inherit it*, 1 *Cor.* 15. 50. that is, as Man in his preſent weak and corruptible eſtate cannot be partaker of it, ſo neither can he comprehend it: when we are

poſſeſſed of it, then, and not till then, ſhall we fully underſtand it. O Bleſſed God! why art thou thus good to ungrateful and unworthy men? Why haſt thou prepared ſuch a happineſs for thoſe, who neither conſider it, nor ſeek after it? Why is ſuch a Price put into the hands of fools, who have not the hearts to make Uſe of it, who fondly chuſe to gratifie their luſts, rather than to ſave their Souls, and fooliſhly prefer the momentary Enjoyments of Sin, and folly, before a glorious and happy immortality? Vain and fooliſh Men! how is it that you underſtand not your own greateſt intereſt? That that Reaſon and Judgment which in other matters conſtantly attends you, does in this, which is of the greateſt moment and concernment to you, ſo ſtrangely fail you? Does not all the World ſee, that you deſire, and ſeek after ſuch things, as you apprehend to be good, and that you are more, or leſs careful in ſeeking after ſuch things, according to the value you put upon them, and the eſteem you have for them? for a ſmall Eſtate you will take great Pains, you will run great hazards, and ſuffer great hardſhips; for a great eſtate you will do and ſuffer more; and for a Crown, or Kingdom yet more; and why then will you not do and ſuffer as much for this Glorious and Eternal Reward, which far

far tranſcends all the Riches and the Glories of the World? The Author to the *Hebrews* tels us, That *Moſes* did deſpiſe the Riches and Honours and Pleaſures of the Court of *Pharaoh* for this Reward. *Heb.* 11 c. 24, 25 v. And that a multitude of Wiſe and Holy men *have had tryal of cruel Mockings and Scourgings, of Bonds and Impriſonment,* and have ſuffered patiently, yea joyfully the worſt things that wicked Men and Devils could inflict upon them, becauſe they had their Eyes upon it, and hoped to obtain it. And St. *Auſtin,* I remember, profeſſes, that he could be content to do or ſuffer any thing, yea to ſuffer the torments of Hell for a time, that he might come to Heaven at laſt. And why is it, Brother, that we have not as great an eſteem of it? or if we have why do we not labour, why are we not willing to do and ſuffer as much for it? Do'ſt thou think, Brother, that this Care and Pains, which I ſpeak of, is needleſs as to the obtaining of it? or may we hope for it from Gods mercy and goodneſs without that ſtrict and holy Life, which I have ſpoken of? What? Do'ſt thou believe Almighty God to be a liar, or that he is not in earneſt, when he tels thee, That *without Holineſs no man ſhall ſee Him, Heb.* 12 14 does not a reward neceſſarily relate to ſervice, and can'ſt thou expect the Reward though thou

do'ſt no ſervice? Canſt thou imagine, that ſuch a reward, a reward ſo great and glorious, that the very beſt of men, notwithſtanding the promiſes of God, dare hardly preſume to hope for it, ſhall be given to thoſe that are Slaves to their own luſts, and either ſerve not God at all, or no farther than their Luſts will give them leave? What? is this a Reward for Apoſtates from God, for Rebels againſt Heaven, for thoſe that deſire it not, or value it not, but prefer the Pleaſures of Sin and the Profits of the World before it? What? will it be the ſame thing as to another World, whether men anſwer the end of their Creation or not, whether they diſhonour their holy profeſſion by an unholy life or not, whether they love God or not, whether they follow the example of Chriſt or not, and in one word, whether they be meet for Heavenly Glory and Felicity, by pure and God-like diſpoſitions, and the Participation of the Divine nature; or be ever ſo unmeet for it, by brutiſh Luſts or Diveliſh Qualities, and diſpoſitions? There is a vaſt difference, dear Brother, between Heaven and Hell, no leſs than there is between light and darkneſs, between the greateſt happineſs and the greateſt miſery; and ought not there to be a vaſt difference likewiſe between thoſe that ſhall enjoy the one, and thoſe that ſhall fall under the

the other? Can a holy and righteous God make ſo great difference between the eternal eſtates of men, as to make ſome eternally happy, and others eternally miſerable, who differ here one from another in little or nothing, but only in a little outward profeſſion, or the obſervation of ſome few Rites and Ceremonies, or in a formal and civil carriage or demeanour? Surely, Brother, it is impoſſible that theſe things ſhould enter into the head of any ſober and conſidering man, and therefore thou muſt needs acknowledge the neceſſity of living a holy life, if thou hopeſt for the Heavenly Glory and Felicity; and is not the Heavenly Glory encouragement enough for thee to do ſo? will not that make thee ſufficient amends for the greateſt Care andPains thou can'ſt take,for the worſt things thou can'ſt ſuffer,or the greateſt hazards thou can'ſt poſſibly run by it? Yes, undoubtedly it will; and therefore I leave the exhortation of the Apoſtle with thee 1 Corinth. 15 58 v. *Therefore my beloved Brethren, be ye ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, alwayes abounding in the work of the Lord, foraſmuch as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.* I ſhall add but one thing more; and I will diſpatch it in few words, *viz.*

CHAP. VI.

Containing a Sixth Argument to a Holy Life, from conſidering, That theſe Rewards and Puniſhments are not ſo far off, as ſome perſons vainly imagine; with the Concluſion of this firſt Part.

6. THat thou wouldeſt Conſider theſe Rewards and Puniſhments which I have ſpoken of, not as things at a great diſtance from thee, but as they are indeed, and in truth, very near unto thee. There is but a little part of a very ſhort life, of a life which, at longeſt, is but a Span long, between thee and them: we have at moſt but ſome few Breaths to draw before we muſt paſs into our Eternal ſtate, and be either happy, or miſerable, without any manner of Change or alteration for ever: Death is continually laying his ſnares for us, and has ſo many ſecret and unknown wayes to do his work upon us, that we live every moment, as it were by miracle; and it is a much ſtranger thing that we have lived till this day, than it would be, if we ſhould dye before the morrow. 'Tis true, we are apt to flatter our ſelves with hopes of long life; but how fond ſuch hopes are, the unexpected Fall of ſome,

or

or other, every day about us, if nothing elſe will do it, may convince us. There are thouſands now in their Graves, that came no ſooner into the World than we, who hoped to live as long, as we can do, in it: and what are we, and what are our hopes, that both may not be cut off within few hours? and why may not we make our beds in the duſt as much ſooner than we expect, as they have done? Now tell me, Brother, haſt thou ſo low an opinion of the heavenly glory and felicity, as that it cannot engage thee to ſerve God ſo little a time for it? or have Hell-torments ſo little of Terrour in them, that thou can'ſt not reſolve to undergo ſo ſhort a trouble to avoid them? or is there any thing in this World which can make thee neglect a matter of ſo great importance to thee, when thou thinkeſt how little a while thou can'ſt enjoy it? The Hiſtories of our Countrey tell us of a *Saxon* Queen in this Land, that by an innocent and happy piece of Policy, prevailed with her Husband to leave his Debaucheries, and to live Chriſtianly: She did it thus; There was a day when the King and his Favourites did feaſt and frolick, in an extraordinary manner; and She, as ſoon as their Mirth was ended, cauſed the ſame place to be covered with dung and filthineſs, and to be made as loathſom as poſſible: and when

ſhe had done, ſhe deſired the King to repair thither, and to look upon the late Scene of their Mirth and Jollity; which the King beholding, and muſing in his mind of the ſudden Change, She took the opportunity to ask him where all the mirth of the paſt day was, and what footſteps did now remain of it? were not all ſuch things as wind, and vanity, which paſs away in an inſtant, and are not to be recalled? And with theſe and the like ſpeeches, ſhe taught him to deſpiſe the world, and to ſeek after the Kingdom of Heaven. I ſhall make no other Uſe of the Story, than to beſeech thee to reflect upon thy life paſt, and to conſider what is become of all thy former Pleaſures: I know that they are all paſt and gone, and that the time is coming when as much may be ſaid of all thy worldly enjoyments; they will be as far from thee, and as uſeleſs to thee, as all thy paſt pleaſures are now: In the hour of Death, and from that hour to all Eternity, thou mayſt ſay with them in the Book of *Wiſedom, What hath Pride profited us? and what good hath Riches with all our vaunting brought us? all thoſe things are paſſed away like a ſhadow, or like a Poſt that haſted by.* And therefore be ſo wiſe for thy own Good, as to contemn theſe worthleſs fugitive things, and for the little remainder of thy life, to endeavour to

make

make ſure of the better, and more abiding things, which God hath prepared for thee in Heaven. Thou haſt ſometime, perhaps, been viſited with Sickneſs, and haſt thought thy ſelf to be upon the borders of the Grave: call to mind, I beſeech thee, what thoughts did then poſſeſs thee: Did'ſt thou not then look upon the World as vanity? and did not all thy paſt Follies torment thee with a bitter remembrance? Did not the few good things that thou had'ſt done, pleaſe thee better than all the World? and did'ſt not heartily repent, that thy whole life was not imployed in ſuch good wayes? Remember, I beſeech thee, that it will ſhortly come to that again; the evil day is at hand, and thy preſent delights will be vaniſhed, and thy worldly enjoyments be uſeleſs and unprofitable; and if thou haſt not the Conſcience of a good life to cheer thee, thou wilt be miſerable without help or remedy. O prepare, prepare, dear Brother, for that time, by a holy and Chriſtian Life, and let nothing upon Earth divert, or hinder thee. Why ſhould that rob thee of thy greateſt Bliſs, which will not profit thee in the leaſt when thou haſt the greateſt need of it? Why ſhould that make thee miſerable for ever, which cannot make thee happy for a little time? Remember thy End, ſaid a Wiſe Man, and thou ſhalt never

do

do amiſs. He that knowes, that he ſtands upon the brink of Eternity, is a bold fool if he dares do wickedly. He is mad that will commit a Crime this day, who knows that before the next he may be bearing the puniſhments of it in everlaſting Sorrows.

Thus have I laid before thee, dear Brother, ſome Arguments and Motives to perſwade thee to a Holy Life: and ſo I have brought the Firſt Part of my intended Work to an end. The things that I have offered to thee, I am ſure deſerve thy ſerious conſideration: let them be conſidered accordingly, and ſuffer them to have their due influence upon thee, and I ſhall give thee no further trouble in this matter. Weigh them well, and according to the Reaſon thou findeſt in them, ſo do; and I ask no more of thee. Live, as a man created by God on purpoſe to know and love and ſerve him here, and to enjoy him for ever hereafter, ought to live. Live, as a man advanced to the knowledg, and profeſſion of Chriſtianity, is obliged to live. Live, as a man that muſt give an account hereafter of his whole Life to a juſt and impartial Judge, is in all reaſon bound to live. Live, as one that believes that he ſhall be unſpeakably, and Eternally miſerable, if he live amiſs; and that he ſhall be

be eternally happy, if he live as he ought. Live, as one that knows that he has but a ſhort life to live, a life that is but a moment in reſpect of Eternity, and that (yet) upon this little moment his Eternal ſtate does depend. In a word. Live, as a man dying, haſtening to the Grave, and to the Judgment-Seat of Chriſt, and to everlaſting Bliſs, or Woe, muſt needs think himſelf concerned to live. Live thus, dear Brother, and I have my Deſire. Only let me beg thy Prayers, that I may live thus likewiſe, that both of us may be happy for ever. *Amen, Amen.*

The End of the Firſt Part.

General

General Directions how to live a Holy and Christian Life.

Part II.

Introduction.

I Am now, Dear Brother, to give thee ſome *Directions* how to live that *Holy* and *Chriſtian Life*, which in the former Part of this Book, I have endeavoured to Perſwade thee to. It ſhall be my Care, not to trouble thee with many, and leſs neceſſary things; and I begg of thee, that it may be thine, to conſider what I ſay impartially, and to give it the regard which, upon conſideration, thou ſhalt find it to deſerve. Now, becauſe I ſuppoſe thee to be convinced, That it is neceſſary thou ſhouldeſt live a Holy Life, if thou wouldeſt be happy eternally; the firſt thing I ſhall adviſe thee to, is,

CHAP

CHAP. I.

Sect. 1. *Containing the First Advice, Seriously to Resolve upon a Holy Life; the necessity of such a Resolution, and the great Virtue and Efficacy of it.*

Sect. 2. *Containing some Directions how to form a lasting Resolution. First, to resolve soberly and deliberately, not rashly and in haste; maturely to consider what it is we must resolve, and carefully to examine all the advantages and disadvantages on both sides. Secondly, to take the matter into consideration several distinct times, before we fix our resolution. Thirdly, to back this Resolution with a solemn Vow.*

Sect. 3. *A prosecution of the same Argument, containing some further Directions in making a lasting resolution; as Fourthly, to write down our Resolutions in the words wherein we make them, and to engage our selves to God in a solemn Bond and Contract. And Fifthly, to make known this resolution to the World, as often as a fit occasion offers, which very much tends to the glory of God, delivers us from many temptations, and makes us more stedfast to what we resolve. And Sixthly, to*

to ſeek out ſome good men who have taken up the ſame Reſolutions, and to contract an intimate Friendſhip and Acquaintance with them; or, if we cannot find any ſuch, to endeavour to perſwade our old Friends and Companions to enter into ſuch a Religious Friendſhip.

1. TO *Reſolve upon it.* Make an abſolute, and peremptory Reſolution to live a Holy Life. 'I ſee, it is neceſſary 'that I ſhould do ſo, (may'ſt thou ſay.) I can-'not be happy for ever, if I do not live ſo; 'and therefore I am reſolved, I will live ſo, 'and nothing ſhall divert or hinder me. Without this peremptory Reſolution, thou wilt never be able to do what thou may'ſt deſire: Thou may'ſt begin well, but wilt fail to perſevere to the end. Thou wilt be as the double-minded man, which St. *James* ſpeaks of, *Chap.* 1. *v.* 8. *unſtable in thy wayes*: one while in the good way, and another while in the bad, according to the circumſtances of thy life, and the Sway of thy inclinations. But with this reſolution begin and proſper. Reſolution worketh wonders every day in other matters; and in this, be confident, it will do much more; becauſe God will bleſs it. It hath a mighty efficacy in it ſelf, and whoever is poſſeſſed of it, ſeldom fails

fails to bring his Deſigns to paſs. It makes a man intent upon the thing he would do, inquiſitive after the beſt means to effect it, watchful and ready to lay hold upon all fitting opportunities, jealous of the leaſt Impediments and Hindrances, bold and conſtant in the midſt of difficulties and dangers, and ſo excludes that forgetfulneſs & Inadvertency, that Negligence and Sloth, that Raſhneſs and Levity, that Doubtfulneſs and Faint-Heartedneſs, which overthrows the good Purpoſes of many, and fruſtrates their beſt Deſigns. But how much greater will the efficacy of it be, thinkeſt thou, when it is backed with the Almighty Grace of God, which in this matter will be ever aſſiſting to it? The truth is, thy work is half done when thou art fully reſolved, and if thy reſolution fail not, I dare promiſe thee as good ſucceſs as thy heart can wiſh. But then care muſt be taken that thy reſolution continue firm, and ſtrong; and that it may do ſo, thou muſt obſerve the following directions.

§. 2. Thou muſt make it ſoberly and deliberately, not raſhly and in haſt. Thou muſt conſider what thou art about to reſolve upon, what difficulties, and diſcouragements, thou art like to meet with, and what dangers

gers and Inconveniences may attend thee in it. And when thou hast done this, thou must consult thy own Reason and Understanding, upon these and the like Questions: 'Is it reasonable that I should undertake, 'and resolve upon such a business as this is? 'is it possible for me to effect it? can I 'march through all the difficulties, and over-'come all the Temptations which may or 'can befall me in it? Is the Design honou-'rable, and worthy of a man? and can I 'hope for a sufficient Recompence for all the 'Troubles it will put me to? And, for the Avoiding of all error and mistake, it will not be amiss for thee, to put down in writeting (if thou can'st) all that thou art to consider upon, as also thy judgment and determination upon every particular. However, fail not to get as clear and distinct an apprehension of every thing as possibly thou can'st, and let nothing pass thee without due consideration. Run through all the parts and duties of a holy life in thy thoughts, and tell thy Heart, 'This I must 'do; this I must fly from; this I must suffer; 'Almighty God requires it, and I cannot 'hope to be excused in any thing. Tell 'me, O my heart, (may'st thou say) wilt 'thou be content I shall do it, or not? Wilt 'thou not prove false to me, if I do resolve it?

'These things I must attend to, not for a 'few days only, or at some certain times and 'seasons, but constantly and perpetually, 'throughout the whole course of my life: 'It must be my business to obey and please 'God in all my wayes, and all my worldly 'affairs and fleshly Pleasures must give place 'to it. Tell me, O my heart, how do'st 'thou approve of this? Have I thy free con-'sent to undertake it? and wilt thou be con-'tent that I now begin it? And then, sup-pose within thy self the greatest temptations, that can befall thee, to discourage and draw thee aside, suppose that thy Mother who bare thee in her Womb, and nourished thee with her Breasts, and loves thee as her life, should come with weeping eyes to thee, and, with the most melting expressions that Love and Sor-row could put into her mouth, should in-treat thee to do some wicked act, or to for-bear the doing of thy duty in any matter: And suppose the Wife of thy bosome, who is as thy very Soul, should joyn with her in the same desire, and tell thee, as *Dalilah* did *Sampson, Judg.* 16. 5. *how can'st thou say I love thee, when thy heart is not with me?* And, it may be, thy deareſt Friends and Fa-miliars may be importunate with thee also for the same thing; And then say unto thy self, 'Shall I be able to withstand all these

'temptations,

'temptations, to resist the Importunities of 'a kind and tender Mother, to turn my back 'upon the Wife of my Bosome, and to dis-'oblige all my Friends, rather than sin against 'God, and wound my own conscience? And further, represent unto thy self the worst things that can befall a man in this World, as likely to befal thy self for thy Conscience towards God: Suppose thou must lose all thou hast in the World, yea and thy very life, if thou wilt not sin against him; suppose thou must suffer the sharpest Reproaches, and the most cruel death that ever was invented, if thou wilt be faithful to him, and do thy duty: And then charge thy Heart to tell thee, whether it will not sink at such a tryal, and basely betray thee to Sin and Shame. 'These are hard things indeed, '(may'st thou say) the bare thoughts of them 'are dreadful; and how much more will the 'things themselves be, when thou comest to 'try them But what good thing was ever 'obtained without some difficulty? and 'what wise man was ever discouraged with 'difficulties, that was sure of a recompense 'far exceeding the worst of Troubles he 'could possibly undergo? Is it not reasonable 'that I should do and suffer any thing that 'my God shall impose upon me? Should not 'that Life and Being which he hath given

'me, be altogether at his ſervice? May not
'my dear and loving Saviour juſtly expect
'as much from me, ſince he hath purchaſed
'me with his moſt precious blood? did not
'he undergo much more for my ſake, than
'he requires me to do for his? and may not
'that joy which encouraged him, be a juſt
'Encouragement for me? will not Heaven
'make Amends for all, and juſtifie my choice
'and reſolution to all the World? What if I
'am weak and frail? What if there be many
'ſubtle Enemies to this my Undertaking?
'Is not he that is with me, greater than all
'that are againſt me? Cannot the Spirit of
'my God make my weakneſs ſtrong, and
'cauſe me to triumph over all my adverſaries?
'has not he done as much for Millions of
'ſuch Weaklings as I am? Have not old
'men, notwitſtanding the Infirmities of Age;
'and young men, notwithſtanding the
'ſtrength of their Luſts; and women,
'notwithſtanding the frailty of their ſex,
'taken up the very ſame reſolution, and in
'ſpight of all the Powers of darkneſs
'and their accurſed Inſtruments made
'it good to the laſt minute of their
'lives? I know, I know, my God and Saviour
'will not fail me in ſo good an Undertaking,
'and he will make my weakneſs to redound
'to the Glory of his Grace; and therefore I

'may,

'may, I muſt, I will, I do reſolve upon a 'holy life. Thus I do adviſe thee, to conſider things before thou do'ſt reſolve, that thy reſolution may be the work of thy whole Soul, that thy Underſtanding may fully approve of it under the moſt diſadvantagious Circumſtances, and thy Will entirely embrace it, and that nothing may befal thee in thy after-life that may ſtagger thee as not foreſeen, or cauſe thee to queſtion the wiſdom of thy Undertaking. And this advice (thou muſt know) is not the meer iſſue of my own brains, but the Counſel of our great and good Maſter in two plain Parables, *Luke* 14. 28, 29. *v.* &c. '*Which of you,* (ſaies he) *in-* '*tending to build a Tower, ſitteth not down* '*firſt, and counteth the Coſt, whether he have* '*ſufficient to finiſh it? leſt happily after he hath* '*laid the foundation, and is not able to finiſh* '*it, all that behold it begin to mock him, ſay-* '*ing, this man began to build, and was not* '*able to finiſh it. Or what King, going to* '*make war againſt another King, ſitteth not* '*down firſt, and conſidereth whether he be able* '*with Ten thouſand to meet him that cometh* '*againſt him with Twenty thouſand, or elſe* '*whilſt the other is yet a great way off, he* '*ſendeth an Embaſſage, and deſireth conditions* '*of Peace.* Which Parables do plainly tell us, That no wiſe man will begin to build, but

upon fore-ſight that he ſhall be able to finiſh: That no wiſe King will begin a War, without firſt conſidering his ability to go through with it. Nor can he be thought wiſe, that will take upon him to be a diſciple of Chriſt, and to follow him in a holy Life, before he hath well conſidered what he undertakes, and what Trouble and Danger it may coſt him to do ſo; the fruits of ſuch raſh and unadviſed Undertakings can ordinarily be no other than ſhame and ſorrow. If Religion be once throughly wrought into the heart, (which will not be done in an hour, or two, and can be done by no better way than by frequent meditations) it will in all probability keep poſſeſſion of it for ever: And if a man be once reſolved upon the Practice of Piety and Vertue, from a full conviction of the goodneſs, and reaſonableneſs of it, he will hardly be turned aſide from it, by any temptation; whereas, if it be admitted into the borders or the skirts of the Soul only, poſſeſs the fancy or Imagination, and by the help of it alone does warn the affections, it will in a little time, be caſt off, and all the good Purpoſes, which it may for the preſent produce, will, upon the leaſt alteration of Circumſtances, be forgotten, or laid aſide.

§. 2. And

§. 2. And therefore in the ſecond place, I ſhall commend to thee, that thou do not fully determine, and fix thy reſolution upon once conſidering, or deliberating, (how ſeriouſly ſoever thou haſt done it) but that thou take the matter twice or thrice into conſideration, after ſome little Intermiſſions: for ſo thou wilt diſcern, whether thy reſolution be the effect of thy Judgment, and thy entire choice; or of a good temper of body apt to receive Religious Impreſſions; and a kindly heat, kindled by the working of thy Imagination. If it be the good temper, and warm Imagination that diſpoſes thee to it, thou wilt be of another mind after thou haſt ſlept, or been dealing in other matters: But, if it proceed from the better Principle, but now mentioned, what thou approveſt of this day, thou wilt approve of to morrow, and for ever; and the more thou conſidereſt things, the better thou wilt like of thy intended reſolution, and the more ready thou wilt be, fully and finally to fix it. What thou haſt conſidered one day, then, in order to a reſolution, my Counſel is, That thou take a Review of it the next day: conſider afreſh what thou art to do, conſider the Pleaſures which thou muſt forſake, and the difficulties thou muſt undergo; and if, after all, thou findeſt thy ſelf ſincerely bent

to ſerve the Lord in a Holy and Chriſtian Life; and no objection offers it ſelf, which thou perceiveſt thy heart to ſtumble at, then fix thy reſolution, reſolve fully, peremptorily and irrevocably. And that it may have all the ſtrength, which we can poſſibly add to it, let me adviſe thee further,

§. 3. To back it with a Vow, with a ſolemn proteſtation to Almighty God, to keep it firm and ſtedfaſt to the end of thy life: for as long as any ſenſe of God remains upon thy Soul, thou wilt dread the Not-doing of that, which by a ſolemn Promiſe to God thou haſt bound thy ſelf to do; it being in the opinion of all mankind a moſt abominable thing, to falſifie our Vows and Oaths to God, and deſerving the ſevereſt vengeance, that can fall upon the heads of wicked Men.

§. 3. 4. And further, when thou haſt done this, it will not be amiſs to write down thy reſolution, and proteſtation, in the very words thou haſt made it, adding likewiſe the year, and Month, and day, wherein thou didſt thus engage thy ſelf; and to keep it by thee, as a thing of great concernment to thee; and once a Month at leaſt to look ſeriouſly upon it, ſaying to thy heart, 'See, 'O my heart, what thou haſt done, obſerve 'the

'the bond which thou haſt laid upon thy ſelf:
'it is thy own Act and Deed, there is no diſ-
'owning it, or excepting againſt it: as ſure
'as I now ſee it with my eyes, it is recorded
'before God in Heaven, and it ſhall one
'day be brought forth againſt me to my ever-
'laſting condemnation, if I do not diſcharge
'and ſatisfie it: Go on, O my heart, go on,
'as thou haſt begun, to keep thy reſolution
'firm, and to pay thy Vows unto the moſt
'High: and be confident that the Lord will
'proſper thy good Deſires, and Endeavours,
'and reward thee according to his gracious
'Covenant and Promiſe, with everlaſting
'Glory and Felicity.

§. 5. All this being done, I think thou may'ſt do well, to make known thy reſolution to the World, as often as fitting occaſions may be offered thee, that is, as often as God may receive honour by it, or thy ſelf be ſecured from temptation or Sin. Such occaſions, in this Age, thou wilt frequently meet with; ſometimes thou wilt fall into the Company of evil men, that diſhonour the Holy Religion which they profeſs, by their wicked and ungodly Lives; and they will not ſpare to reproach thee for not running with them into the ſame exceſſes and debaucheries: then thou may'ſt do well to tell them,

them, 'That thou art fully reſolved againſt 'ſuch practices, and that thou did'ſt long 'ſince take upon thee a profeſſion which al-'lows them not, as they have alſo done; a pro-'feſſion of obedience to the doctrine, and of 'conformity to the example of the pure and 'holy Jeſus; and that thou can'ſt not with-'out groſs Hypocriſy and inexcuſable Folly 'act ſo contrary to it as they do. Such a declaration as this, will honour thy Lord and Maſter, and ſhame evil doers; if they be not paſt all ſhame, and all Hope of amend-ment. Sometimes again, thou wilt meet with men that will play the Devils part, and uſe all their Cunning to perſuade thee to ſome ſinful act: Such men thou muſt let know without delay, 'That thou art in the full 'Purpoſe of thy heart, as well as in outward 'Profeſſion, a Chriſtian; and that thou art 'reſolved to ſerve thy Lord and Maſter to 'thy death, and never to do the thing, which 'thou ſhalt know, will in the leaſt diſpleaſe 'him: that, how light a matter ſoever 'others may make it, to diſown him by their 'works, whom with their Mouths they own 'and flatter, yet thou eſteemeſt it ſo baſe and 'ſhameful a thing, that by the help of God's 'Grace, thou haſt determined never to be 'guilty of it; and that thou can'ſt not but 'believe it to be as bad, nay much worſe,

to

'to be false to God, than to be false to men;
'and that they, who do not think so, do
'most unworthily prefer vile dust and ashes,
'before the High and Holy God of Heaven
'and Earth. This must needs stop the Mouths of the most impudent Tempters; and when thou art known to the World, to be thus well resolved, thou wilt find a happy freedom from temptations by it. Thy old companions in sin (if thou hast had any) will cease to importune thee, and the Devil, in despair of success, will seldom trouble thee. However, thou wilt disarme him of one of the most dangerous weapons, by which he destroys the Soul of Men; nay, thou wilt turn it against himself, and make that to be the Instrument of thy safety, which might have been the Instrument of thy ruine: I mean, the fear of Reproach from wicked Men, (which keeps thousands in bondage to sin all their days, going on in their wonted Courses, not because they approve, or are truly pleas'd with them, but because they are ashamed to amend them) which Reproach, when thou hast once couragiously contemned by publikely owning thy resolution, thou wilt make but little account of afterwards: for, as a resolute Soldier, that has passed through the hardest service against the enemy, without Wound or Scar, feels no Fear within himself

ſelf of that which remains; ſo it will be with thee, having born the firſt Reproaches of an ungodly World, which are ever the moſt bitter, thou wilt readily contemn and ſet at nought the reſt. The only Fear of Reproach, which will then remain in thee, will be, but that which is juſt, and good, *viz.* the Fear of deſerved Reproach, for not making good that reſolution which thou haſt declared to the World; and the greater thy Fear of this is, the ſafer and the happier thou wilt be.

Object. Againſt this part of my advice, I know but one thing that can be objected, *viz.* That in caſe thou ſhouldeſt fail to make good thy Reſolution after this, returning to thy former wickedneſs or careleſneſs, as many perhaps have done after they have purpoſed well, thou ſhalt bring ſhame upon thy ſelf, and Diſhonour to thy Holy Religion.

Anſ. And true it is, (my Brother) that theſe will be the effects of thy Failing, and it is as true, that great Care ought to be taken, that nothing be done which will produce ſo great an Evil as either of thoſe. But it is not neceſſary, that thou ſhouldeſt fail thus; nay it is not probable, if thou uſeſt that ſincerity, Conſideration, Caution, and Circumſpection which I have commended to thee,

thee, because of the sufficient Grace of God, which will never fail thee: so that the force of the objection lies not against all resolving or owning thy resolution, but against doing it rashly, and unadvisedly, proudly and vainglorioufly: and it only admonisheth us to proceed with great deliberation and prudence, and to forbear the publick Owning of it, till we have had some proof of our sincerity towards God, by the Discharge of our several duties, and the resistance of some of the more dangerous Temptations; especially if we know our selves to be of a hasty Temper, and not very constant in other things. But this being secured, I doubt not but thou wilt find my advice good; and I did the rather propose it to thee, because of the abounding wickedness of the Age; for, though almost every man calls himself a Christian, and thinks himself affronted if he be not so esteemed, yet true Christian Piety is owned by very few, and it is become as disgraceful, truly to practise it, or to plead for it, (more is our misery) as it is to disown that good name, which should never be without it; and therefore we take it to be as much our duty now, thus to own the cause of it against the vile Practices of those, who sottishly reproach and persecute it, even whil'st they call themselves Christians; as it was of old, the

duty

duty of Chriſtians to own the Name and profeſſion, againſt the Perſecutions of the Heatheniſh and unbelieving World. Certain it is, That Chriſt is as well confeſſed, by maintaining and defending that real Holineſs, which he came to implant in the Hearts and lives of Men, as he is by the Belief and Acknowledgment of thoſe things which he was pleaſed to do and ſuffer in order to it; and therefore on the other hand, the Denying, the diſſembling, or not owning our obligation to this Holineſs, or our reſolution to imbrace, and live in it, when ever we have a juſt cauſe to own it, is as truly Denying of Chriſt, as our proteſting in caſe of danger, that we know him not, or belong not to him, can be thought to be. Be not afraid nor aſhamed, then, to make thy ſelf known to the World to be in the reſolution of thy Heart a true Chriſtian, that Chriſt may not be aſhamed of thee before the Angels of God, in that day when all the Secrets of mens hearts ſhall be made manifeſt.

Thoſe vile Wretches that live to the diſhonour of him whoſe name they are called by, and to the Reproach of humane Nature, bluſh not (as thou may'ſt obſerve) to make known the baſeneſs of their Deſigns, and the lewdneſs of their actions; they commit their wickedneſs

wickedneſs in the ſight of the Sun, and are not aſhamed to boaſt of it when they have done; and ſhouldeſt thou be aſhamed to live worthy of Chriſt, to be truly a Son of God, and to have a deſign upon Glory and Immortality? No, let them be aſhamed that do ſhameful things; but for thee, thy deſign is honourable and worthy of a man, and thy reſolution is becoming a Chriſtian, and it is neceſſary to thee, being one. There is a ſhame, we are told, that ends in death; and ſurely this is that, when men are aſhamed of that which is truly their Glory, and dare not be, what they know they ought to be, becauſe they may be reproached when they are known to be ſo.

§. 6. There is but one thing more to be added in this matter, *viz.* That thou wilt do well to ſeek out ſome good men that have taken up the ſame reſolution, and to acquaint thyſelf with them, and if poſſible thou can'ſt, to make them thy familiar, and boſome-Friends. Let them know thy Deſign, and Purpoſe of living Holily, and Chriſtianly. Tell them what an Eſteem thou haſt for them, becauſe thou perceiveſt that they deſign to do no leſs: beg their good opinion, and their Love according as they ſhall behold thy ſincerity, and reality in the profeſ-

ſion

ſion thou do'ſt make: deſire their Prayers, their Inſtruction, their reproofs, their Encouragements, according as they ſhall ſee thee ſtand in need of them; and that they will look upon thee as a poor and unworthy member of that Holy body, to which they do belong, and of which Chriſt is the head; and that hopes by the mercy of God to be glorified with Chriſt one day, together with them; and that they will therefore have that Regard and tenderneſs for thee, which the members of the ſame body have for one another: and deſire them to accept of the like Regard and Love from thee, and of all the good offices that true Chriſtian Charity can enable thee to do for them. I confeſs it will be no eaſy matter for thee to find ſuch perſons; the number of them is but ſmall, and they are generally no great pretenders, but modeſt and reſerved, and perhaps more reſerved, all things conſidered, than they ought to be: for, though the vile Hypocriſy of pretenders to Holineſs in this laſt Age, and the dayly Abuſe of its good name by men, that ſeek themſelves in the Ruine of the Church, may ſeem to commend their cloſeneſs, and Deſire of being unknown, yet the growth of Atheiſm and Prophaneneſs, which thoſe falſe pretenſes have occaſioned, and the danger we are fallen into, of Loſing

thoſe

thoſe great advantages for the Practice of Piety, which our Church affords us, does more ſtrongly require them to lay open that Piety which they practiſe in ſecret, and to let the World know, by actions ſuitable to a good profeſſion, That there are ſome, that own the Cauſe of real Holineſs, without Hypocriſy and Guile. And let me tell thee by the way, that if theſe good men of this Church, will thus ſhew themſelves, and unite together in the ſeveral Parts of the Kingdom, diſpoſing themſelves into Fraternities, or friendly Societies, and engaging each other in their ſeveral and reſpective Combinations, to be helpful and ſerviceable to one another in all good Chriſtian wayes, it would be the moſt effectual means for reſtoring our decaying Chriſtianity to its Primitive Life and Vigour, and the ſupporting of our tottering, and ſinking Church. But, not to lead thee too far from the matter I was about; If thou can'ſt find any of theſe good people, I have ſpoken of; I charge thee let thy heart cleave unto them, and let there not be the leaſt ſtrangeneſs, ſo far as lies in thee, between you. Be all as one man, (thus it was with the Primitive Chriſtians *Act.* 2.) and ſo march forward in the good wayes of God againſt all oppoſition, obſerving and *conſidering one another, to provoke unto love and*

to good works, as the Apoſtle's expreſſions are, *Heb.* 10. 23. having an Eye continually to the Captain of our Salvation, who is entred into Heaven, in deſpight of all the Powers of darkneſs; and is there preparing a place for us. Thou wilt be no ſooner engaged with theſe good men in Love and Friendſhip, but thou wilt begin to feel the advantages of it. Thou wilt be afraid of no diſcouragements, when thou haſt gotten the aſſiſtance of ſo many true Friends; and thou wilt never fall back from that reſolution, which hath been the occaſion of engaging thee in ſuch good Company. If thou forgetteſt thy ſelf at any time, thou wilt not be without a Remembrancer, and whenever thou faileſt, thou wilt find a reſtorer: and when thou art ſeized with any coldneſs or dulneſs, they will be ready to warm and quicken thee. Theſe are advantages ſo conſiderable, that thou can'ſt not prudently ſtick at any pains it may coſt thee to procure them: and therefore let me tell thee for a concluſion of this particular, that if thou can'ſt not be ſo happy as to be acquainted with any of theſe good men, thou muſt do as much as lies in thee, to make ſome of thy old Acquaintance good, by engaging them in the ſame Reſolution, which thou haſt taken up thy ſelf. To which Purpoſe, thou muſt

muſt make Uſe of all the knowledge thou haſt of them, and the Intereſt thou haſt in them: tell then what thou art reſolved upon, with the Grounds and Reaſons of thy Reſolution, urge them to conſider and weigh them ſeriouſly, and impartially: if they approve of what thou haſt done, preſs them to do the ſame; if they have ought to object againſt it, anſwer their Objections, and remove their Prejudices: if thou can'ſt not work upon them at one time, try what thou can'ſt do at another, and watch for the fitteſt Seaſons for thy Purpoſe: if one way of diſcourſing will not take effect, try what another way will do, and remember to fit thy ſelf to their Tempers, and diſpoſitions, ſo far as innocently thou may'ſt: If Reaſon will not prevail, try whether Importunity may not, and to all Endeavours with them fail not to add Prayers to God for them: in a word, preſs them with Arguments and Love, and preſs Almighty God with Prayers in their behalf, and be confident, that ſooner or later thou ſhalt ſpeed according to thy hearts deſire. One Perſon thus gained will make thee amends for all thy pains; for beſides that, he may prove in a ſhort time as ſerviceable a Friend to thee, as thoſe that entered upon a holy Life before thee, he will be a far greater Comfort to thee

than any of them: becauſe in all the Good he does, thou wilt have ſome kind of Share, and every ſtep he takes in thoſe good wayes thou haſt brought him to, will be as a new Pledge to aſſure thee of thy future Glory; there being no greater Promiſes made to any, than to thoſe *who turn to righteouſneſs, from the error of their wayes*; ſee *Dan.* 12. 3. *v.* But enough hath been ſaid of Framing and Fixing thy Reſolution, and the things which I can conceive to be requiſite for the making it firm and effectual. It is now time that I direct thee how to put it in practice, and therefore,

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Sect. 1. *Containing the ſecond Advice,* To take up our Croſs and forſake all to follow Chriſt; *wherein is explained the Nature of this duty, and the neceſſity of it.*

Sect. 2. *Containing ſeveral Arguments to reconcile us to this duty of Self-Denial, from the neceſſity of it, in Order to our ſpiritual Life and Health, from the example of our Saviour, who was a great Pattern of Self-Denial; from the reaſonableneſs of this Duty conſidered in it ſelf, and the great advantages of it.*

Sect. 3. *Containing ſome Directions how to put this Duty of Self-Denial in practice.*

§. 1. THOU *muſt deny thy ſelf, take up thy Croſs, and forſake all.* This is the firſt thing that is to be done by thoſe that are reſolved upon a Holy and Chriſtian Life; and it is ſo neceſſary to be done in the firſt place, that if thou faileſt in it, it will be a vain thing for me to offer thee any further direction. Now, it ſo much concerns thee

to be fully perſuaded of this truth, that thou muſt give me Leave to ſhew thee, that I tell thee no more in this caſe, and give no other Advice, than what our bleſſed Lord and Maſter hath done: ſee *Luke* 9. 23, 24. *He ſaid to them all, if any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, take up his Croſs daily, and follow me; for whoſoever will ſave his life ſhall loſe it, but whoſoever will loſe it for my ſake, the ſame ſhall ſave it.* The meaning of which words, is plainly this, all that will be Chriſtians indeed, muſt deny themſelves, take up their Croſs, and follow Chriſt, and not reſerve ſo much as their very Lives, but be willing and ready to reſign up all for him. But leſt we ſhould imagine this to concerne ſome choice perſons only, whom he deſigned to bring to greater perfection than others are obliged to aim at, ſuch as his Apoſtles may be thought to be, he was pleaſed to ſpeak as much, at another time, to the multitudes that followed him, *Luke* 14. *c.* 25, 26, 27. *v. There were great multitudes with him, and he turned and ſaid unto them, if any man come to me, and hate not his Father and Mother, and Wife and Children, and Brethren and Siſters, yea and his own Life alſo, he cannot be my Diſciple; and whoſoever doth not bear his Croſs and come after me, cannot be my Diſciple;*

ple; that is, he that will not deny, and forſake (as we are wont to do thoſe things we hate) whatſoever is dear to him in the World, be it Father and Mother, or Wife and Children, or Brethren and Siſters, preferring Chriſt before them all, and is not fully reſolved and prepared to ſuffer any thing, how hard ſoever, for Chriſt's ſake, cannot be a Diſciple of Chriſt, or a true Chriſtian. The Word [*Cannot*] ſignifies ſuch an Impoſſibility, as implies a Contradiction; to deny our ſelves, and all our deareſt intereſts in this World, is eſſential to the ſincere profeſſion of Chriſtanity, and therefore he, who will not do this, cannot be a Chriſtian. Thoſe dear things which he cannot renounce, will not ſuffer him to take this profeſſion upon him, or if he do take it upon him, they will in time cauſe him to repent his Undertaking, and to fall away with ſhame from it. And then in the words following, he adviſes them to conſider ſeriouſly what they are about to do, before they took upon them to be his Diſciples; and that his Advice might ſink more deeply into their minds, he expreſſes himſelf in two Parables (which I have before mentioned) *viz. of a man intending to build a Tower, and ſitting down firſt to conſider the Coſt; and of a King going to make War againſt another King, and conſidering firſt his abilities*

to go through with it: And then he concludes *v.* 33. *So likewiſe, whoſoever he be of you, that forſaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my Diſciple.* Which concluſion makes it a plain caſe, That we cannot wiſely nor ſafely engage our ſelves to Chriſt, or liſt our ſelves as Soldiers under his Banner, till we have denyed, renounced, given up all Intereſt in our ſelves, and whatſoever is dear unto us. Not thus prepared, we do but exaſperate and provoke an Enemy, our old Enemie the Devil, whoſe Forces we ſhall not be able to withſtand; and ſo lay foundation for our future Shame and Ruin; and though at firſt reading, we may think thoſe Compariſons but ill applied, for what agreement is there between having Riches and Armies, and forſaking all that we have? yet upon ſecond thoughts, we may perceive a very wiſe Deſign in it. For Chriſtianity is a ſpiritual Warfare, and ſome of the moſt Powerful Enemies we are to encounter, are, the Riches and Pleaſures and Honours of this World, and therefore the ſtrength and courage of a Chriſtian Soldier, whereby he will obtain a glorious Victory, conſiſts in Self-Denyal, and a contempt of this World; and a Chriſtian is God's Building, or ſpiritual Houſe, the Temple of God, and the very foundation of this Building is laid in Humility and Self-Denyal, from whence

whence proceed all thoſe Divine Graces and Virtues, which both perfect & adorn the Building, which make Humility and Poverty of Spirit, Renouncing the Love of this World, and the very Poſſeſſion of it, too, in ſome caſes, as neceſſary to our becoming Chriſtians, as a great deal of money is to erect and perfect a ſtately and magnificent Building. This appears to be a great truth, and no groundleſs Fancy, by the Parable of the Wedding-Supper in the former part of the Chapter, which thou may'ſt do well to reflect upon. The Maſter ſent his ſervants to call them that were bidden, when his Supper was ready; but they all refuſed, and deſired to be excuſed: one had bought a piece of ground, and he muſt go and ſee it; another had bought five yoke of Oxen, and he muſt go and prove them; and another had married a Wife, and he could not come: but when he ſent his Servants to call the Poor, the Blind, and the Lame, they came in immediately; ſo that the poor and miſerable people of the World, that have no Worldly thing to truſt to, or thoſe who have theſe things, but have conquered the Love of them, are better diſpoſed to receive the Goſpel, and to become Chriſtians, than the Rich and the Great that have the World at will, as we ſay, and wallow in the Pleaſures thereof. We have a very remarkable

remarkable Inſtance of the Miſchief that wordly Riches do to thoſe that both have and love them, in the 10*th Chapter* of St. *Mark*'s Goſpel, and the 17, and 18.*v.* &c. and there are ſeveral things in the *Chapter*, relating to it, that deſerve our Regard. In the verſes before, we find our bleſſed Saviour diſpleaſed with his Diſciples for forbidding little children to be brought unto him, and ſaying to them *Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of ſuch is the Kingdom of God*; that is, their Innocency and Simplicity, their willingneſs to be guided and ſuſtained by others, makes them the fitteſt Emblems of thoſe that do truly belong to my Church, and Kingdom. And then he adds, *Verily I ſay unto you, whoſoever ſhall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he ſhall not enter therein*, that is, he that takes not the Chriſtian profeſſion upon him, as a little child, that is, with that very Humility, Diſintereſſedneſs, Self-Denyal & Reſignation, as is remarkable in little children, will never ſubmit to thoſe lawes which I give to the World, and ſhall never be received by me as a Chriſtian. Now immediately upon this, as if Divine Providence had deſigned it for a confirmation of this truth, there came a young man to Chriſt, upon a very weighty and important buſineſs: this young

young man's heart was in a good meaſure ſet upon eternal life, and he had entertained a great opinion of Chriſt, as appeared by the haſt he made, by the humility of his carriage, and the words he uſed to him. *He came running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, ſaying, Good Maſter what ſhall I do to inherit eternal life?* he had done much in order to it before, *he had kept the Commandments from his youth up*; ſo he profeſſed, and there is no Doubt but he ſpake what he thought, and what he had done in a good meaſure. for it is ſaid *v.* 21. *That Jeſus loved him*, that is, he approved of his good Beginnings, and deſired that they might be perfected: but when he told him, that there was one thing ſtill wanting, *viz. that he muſt go and ſell all, and give to the Poor, and take up his Croſs and follow him*; the forward young man diſliked his Counſel, *became ſad, and went away* grieved; and why? *becauſe he had great poſſeſſions*; he had them, and he loved them likewiſe; and who can blame him for being ſad, when he was told, That either he muſt loſe Eternal life, or part with them? He had not got his Riches by fraud and deceit, by violence and oppreſſion, as many among us have done, and reſolve to keep them, and yet hope for everlaſting Life, (for ſo he had not kept the Commandements,

mandements which Chriſt ſpake to him of,) his Love to the World had not prevailed ſo far upon him, as to draw him to ſuch wickedneſs, but his fault was; that he had ſo great a Love to his Riches, that he could not find in his heart to part with them, no not for the Obtaining of Everlaſting life. Had he been as a little child, and had valued them no more than a child would have done, he had obtained his deſire, and had entred into the Kingdom of God: But, becauſe it was not thus with him, his good meanings miſcarried, and he fell ſhort of that happineſs which he ſought after. Thus was this unhappy man a ſad Inſtance of the truth of our bleſſed Saviours words; and ſo the Diſciples looked upon him, being aſtoniſhed at the bewitching power of worldly poſſeſſions; (for it is not improbable, that this might be one cauſe of their wonder, as well as the words of their Maſter upon this accident, for though his firſt words, *how hardly ſhall thoſe that have Riches enter into the Kingdom of God?* might have aſtoniſhed them another time, yet his ſecond words, *How hard is it for them that truſt in Riches to enter into the Kingdom of God?* would have removed their aſtoniſhment; it being eaſy for them to apprehend, that thoſe that truſt in Riches will not truſt in God, and therefore ſhall not be ſaved by him,) but they were

were aſtoniſhed to ſee a man that meant ſo well, and was come ſo near to the Kingdom of God, overthrown by his great poſſeſſions; and ſince Riches had ſo great a Power over him, and could turn him back from the Kingdom of God, they believed, they would turn all the rich men in the World from it; if he, after having kept the Commandements from his youth up, did truſt in his Riches, no Rich man could be found, they thought, that they did not truſt in them; and therefore ſaid among themſelves, *v.* 16. *Who then can be ſaved?* and though *Peter* immediately expreſſed ſome hope of his Salvation, and the Salvation of his fellow-Diſciples, becauſe they had left all, and followed him; yet it appears from what follows in the *Chapter* from *v.* 35. that he was deceived in his opinion of what they had done; for, though they had left their poſſeſſions to follow him, yet there was ſomething of Selfiſhneſs ſtill remaining in them, and to be renounced by them: they had too great an opinion of the Worlds grandure, and they aimed at it more than they were to do; and this their Maſter was very well aware of, and therefore he tells them in another place, [*Mat.* 18.23.] (when they had propoſed a Queſtion to him which diſcovered the Inclinations of their hearts, asking him, *who was the greateſt in the Kingdom of Heaven*) That *except they were*

were converted and became as little Children, that is, as unconcerned for that greatneſs which they thought of, as little children are, *They ſhould not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* They were converted in a good meaſure then, and had given a good evidence of it, by quitting their poſſeſſions for their Maſter's ſake: but it ſeems there was ſtill ſomething to be done: they were not ſo eſtranged from the World, nor ſo reſigned as to all fleſhly Intereſt, but they needed to be put in mind, that they muſt deny themſelves more intirely, *and become as little children*; then would they be fit for that ſervice he deſigned to put them upon, and not till then. And thus indeed it was with them; a for, whil'ſt their heads were poſſeſt with Fancy, that their Maſter was to be a mighty temporal Prince, and their Souls were hankering after the Glories which they imagined they ſhould partake of with him, they were often offended with his diſcourſe, and when they ſaw him in the hands of his enemies and began to ſuſpect the Ruine of their hopes and expectations, they ſhamefully deſerted him. Thus in the 8*th* chap. of St. *Mark's* Goſpel, when he began to tell them, *That he muſt ſuffer many things, and be rejected of the chief Prieſts and Elders and Scribes, and be put to death*, Peter *took him and rebuked him*

him, *v.* 32. And when thoſe things were coming upon him, which he ſpake of, *They all forſook him and fled*, as we read *Mark* 14. 50. *v.* but then afterwards, when their Miſtakes were rectified, and their Souls more perfectly purged from the Love of earthly things, by the deſcent of the Holy Spirit upon them, every word that their Maſter had ſpoken to them, and which the Spirit brought to their Remembrance, was dear unto them, and they were not afraid nor aſhamed to confeſs him before their greateſt enemies. Then, the Croſs of Chriſt was their greateſt Glory; and to be made like to him in ſuffering, and patience, and reſignation to God, was the great Deſire, and Joy of their Hearts. Then they could call upon men to deny themſelves, and forſake all, as earneſtly, as their Maſter had done before them; for what elſe do thoſe repeated exhortations ſignify, *of not living to our ſelves*; *of dying to our Sins*; *of being crucified to the World*; *of being crucified, dead and buried with Chriſt*; *of offering our ſelves Sacrifices to God*, and many more the like, which we read in their Epiſtles? and indeed they did it very effectually, whil'ſt their doctrine and Practice went Hand in Hand together; for, in ſpight of the wickedneſs of the World, and the ſubtile malice of the Devil, they prevailed

vailed in all places, and filled every corner of the World with Wonders of Self-Denyal, and Patience, and Contempt of the World; with men that could take *joyfully the spoyling of their Goods*, as we read *Heb.* 10. *v.* 34. And that counted not their Lives dear for Christ's sake, and the Gospels. And such Self-Denying men were Christians generally in the first Ages of Christianity: 'Witness 'Athenagoras, who speaking of those of his 'time, tels us. We are not moved with 'the loss of our Estates, which our enemies 'wrest from us, nor with the violence that 'is offered to our Credit and Reputation, or if 'there be any thing of greater concernment 'than these; for, although these things are 'mightily prized and valued amongst men, 'yet can we despise and slight them: nay, we 'cannot only when beaten refrain from 'striking again, and make no resistance a-'gainst those that invade and spoyl us; but 'to those that smite one cheek, we can turn 'the other, and to them that take away the 'coat, we can let go the cloak also. Thus did the Apostles and first Christians deny themselves, and forsake all; and are not we bound to do so likewise, thinkest thou? may we be his Disciples upon easier terms than they were? has he made the way to Heaven broader than it was, and given us allowances which he

vouchsafed

vouchsafed not to them of former Ages no certainly. It is true, we are not altoge ther in the same circumstances as they were in; for, the Christian profession (though now honourable among us) was then so vile a thing in the eyes of the World, and so extreamly hated, that none could take it up, and own it publikely, without hazarding the loss of all they had; and therefore, if any were so rash as to take it up, before they had denyed themselves, they quickly discovered their rashness and want of Self-Denyal, by falling away from it: and therefore it must be granted, that Self-Denyal is not now so necessary, as to the Taking up and Retaining the bare profession of Christianity as it was of old: but then, as to the Practice of it, it is certainly as necessary as ever it was; and though the Profession be honoured at present, yet the Practice is as much despised, and the making good of what we do profess in a pure and Holy Life, will as certainly expose a Man to as many Evils (God be thanked, that I cannot say to death) as the Profession of old was wont to do; and therefore, he that will satisfy that name which he hath taken upon him, and observe the Profession which he hath made in Baptisme, must be brought to that Frame and Temper of Mind, which those good men in

the beginning of Christianity were brought to, that is, he must be taken off from himself, from all self-interests, and self-satisfactions, he must renounce all propriety in himself and every thing else, be dead to the World, have no more affection to the worldly things, than the dead have; that so nothing may hinder him from living unto God. There are but few indeed that seriously consider this, and therefore we see, that men generally account themselves Christians from their Baptisme, and as long as they do not renounce their Baptisme, they are confident that they are so: but he that hath told us, *that many are called*, that is, to be Christians; but *few are chosen*, that is, will approve themselves to be so, makes another judgment of them; and they will know it one day to their Shame and Sorrow. They have fallen by God's good providence upon that which is in fashion among us, and they see at present no Reason why they should cast it off, I mean, the outward Profession of Christianity: but as for that which is not fashionable and in Credit, that is, the Denying of our selves, and Dying to the World, they never understood it; and because they do not deny themselves, and dye to the World, they cannot live to God.

This might suffice, my Brother, to convince thee, that thou must deny thy self, and forsake

forſake all, if thou deſireſt to live a holy and Chriſtian Life. But becauſe I know mens backwardneſs to entertain this hard Saying, as they are apt to term it, and becauſe I know that it is ſo abſolutely neceſſary, that thoſe who will live a Chriſtian Life, do both believe, and practiſe it; I ſhall ſhew thee yet further, that the Not-conſidering, or the Not-practiſing this Self-Denyal, hath been the main cauſe, why ſo many have rejected the Goſpel in all Ages, and why ſo many of theſe that have ſeemed to receive it, have yielded ſo lame and ſo imperfect an obedience to it. Did'ſt thou never read in thy Bible, how few of thoſe that heard Chriſt preach whil'ſt he was upon the earth, and ſaw the Miracles that he wrought, eſpecially of the greater ſort, did truly believe in him? *Have any of the Rulers or of the Phariſees believed on him*, was a choaking Queſtion to any that would dare to ſpeak for him, *John* 7. *c.* 48. *v.* Thoſe few Diſciples that he had, were of the poorer ſort of people, that had not much to truſt to, or much to loſe for his ſake; if any of the richer or greater ſort were convinced, that He was the Chriſt, yet they did not dare to own it, they would go by night, and in ſecret to tell him of their Faith; but publikly and openly they profeſſed it not: and what might be the

Reaſon of this, do'ſt thou think? Had not theſe great men thoſe natural Powers of judging, of aſſenting and conſenting to the truth, which the others had? was not their natural courage as great, and would they not have ſhewed it as much in other Caſes, as theſe poor people could have done? Yes undoubtedly. In all other matters they were the wiſe, thoſe the ignorant, they the bold and the hardy, thoſe the poor ſpirited and cowardly: but in this caſe the wiſe were fools, and the couragious meer Daſtards. And how was this? thoſe great, thoſe rich and proud men could not, or would not learn this one leſſon, which would have opened their blind eyes, and have raiſed their poor Spirits, to that degree of Boldneſs, which they beheld in the Diſciples of Chriſt, and wondered at: *How can ye believe* (ſaid Chriſt himſelf to them) *as long as ye receive Honour from one another, and ſeek not the Honour that cometh from God only, John* 5. *c.* 44. *v.*? They loved themſelves, and the Praiſe of men too well, to approve of any thing that would leſſen their Reputation in the leaſt, or bring them one ſtep lower in the Eſteem of the World: and they were too covetous, as appears from other places of Scripture, to leave all, to follow one that had not a houſe to put his head in. Did'ſt thou never

obſerve

obſerve the monſtrous unbelief of many among us, and the groſs Hypocriſy of others? did'ſt thou never obſerve, what great oppoſition is made by ſome men, againſt ſome of the cleareſt truths of Chriſtianity, who yet ſeem very fond of other truths, that are not ſo clear, and lye not ſo level to humane capacities? and did'ſt thou never take notice, how ſtrict ſome men are in ſome things, who yet allow themſelves in the breach of very plain and very weighty precepts? as for Inſtance, the Doctrine of the Trinity we ſee unanimouſly acknowledged by many thouſands among us, when the Divine authority of Chriſt's Miniſters, and the Right of their maintenance meets with many oppoſers in all places: and ſome men can preach and pray from morning till night, and talk Scripture to each other with much ſeeming ſeriouſneſs, when like the Phariſees of old they will embrace any fair occaſion that is offered to devour the Houſe of a poor Widow or Orphan, or to exalt themſelves ſomewhat higher in the World; And what do'ſt thou think is the Reaſon of theſe things? The ſame without doubt, that hindred the Jews of old from receiving Chriſt: and if theſe truths which they profeſs to believe, and theſe Chriſtian duties which they are conſtant in, did as much oppoſe their worldly Intereſts, and fleſhly Luſts, as the acknowledg-

ing of Jeſus to be the Chriſt, did oppoſe the Intereſts and Luſts of the unbelieving Jews, they would quickly diſcover the truth of it, by falling away from thoſe truths and thoſe dutyes, if not alſo from the whole Religion. Not that I believe, that they have been meer diſſemblers from their firſt profeſſion, or that they are, and have been ſo zealous in ſome things meerly for the compaſſing of worldly Ends, without any conviction of the truth or goodneſs of them, (for I doubt not but many of them have meant well from the very beginning) but, That naughty and corrupt affections, which being unrenounced, did ſo fatally prejudice the Jews againſt the Perſon of Chriſt, do as ſtrongly prejudice them againſt great part of his doctrine. Thoſe corrupt affections which they ſhould have renounced at their firſt ſetting out, are like a thick cloud upon the eyes of their minds, not ſuffering them to diſcern thoſe truths, which to reſigned men are as manifeſt as the Sun at noon-day, and as a ſtrong byaſs upon their Wills, drawing them aſide from thoſe good paths, which they have a deſire to walk in. They purpoſe well in the general, like the Rich man before ſpoken of, when he came to Chriſt, and they do well in thoſe things that oppoſe not their inordinate affections; but when they are to learn thoſe Duties,

to

to which their Lusts will not be reconciled, either they are not able to understand them, or have not the Power to practise them; as the Wolf in the Fable, that was set to school to read, could make no word of all the Letters, but a Lamb, because of his appetite to the flesh of that harmless Creature; so they can understand, approve, and follow nothing but what they love, and are inclined to, or however nothing that crosses their Affections and Inclinations. I will conclude therefore (and I think I have good reason for it) that if we desire and are resolved to be Christians, we must in the first place renounce our selves, and entirely put off our carnal Lusts and Worldly affections: Our Desires and Resolutions will be vain and come to nought, if we fail to Do it. We may purpose well, and perhaps do many good things, though we do omit it; we may make a fair Show for a while, and mount up to Heaven in our own thoughts, and in the opinion of the World; but, like as an unwise Builder, that raises a very fair structure upwards, not having laid a good and firm foundation, will in a little time be convinced of this error, by its ruine; so when a time of tryal and temptation comes, our own Fall will shew us ours: when the Winds blow, and Rains fall, and the Floods come, our pretty

Frame of Religion will come to Ruine, and our high raiſed hopes will periſh together with it. Now after this, I ſuppoſe, I need not tell thee that I have inſiſted ſo much upon this Particular with great Reaſon.

§. 2. It remains, That I endeavour briefly to beget a good opinion in thee of the duty I have been ſpeaking of; to ſhew thee, that it is not ſuch an unreaſonable thing as ſome men fancy it, to be obliged to it, and that Chriſt cannot reaſonably be thought a hard Maſter for laying it upon us. For, ſurely

1. He that hath laid nothing upon us, but what our State and Condition, and his own Deſign of Love and mercy towards us, did make neceſſary, cannot be judged hard or cruel to us; and hath Chriſt required any thing more in this matter? No undoubtedly; he could not give us health and life (how much ſoever he deſired it) without removeing our Diſeaſes: he could not be the Author of Salvation to us, without taking away that which was our Ruine and Deſtruction. And what was our Diſeaſe and Ruine, but an inordinate and immoderate Love of our ſelves, and our fellow-Creatures, whereby we fell away from God, to be as Gods our ſelves, to pleaſe our ſelves, to provide for our ſelves, to do our own Wills, and to ſatisfy our own Deſires without reſtraint or comptrol?

comptrol? Now, what is it that we would have, when we quarrel with Christ, and call this Commandement grievous? would we have our health and our desires too? would we live and dye also? would we serve God a little, and our selves much more? or would we serve him so far only, as we shall please our selves, and have that be taken for all the service that we owe him? If thou thinkest this to be unreasonable, as thou canst not but doe, thou must needs acknowledg it to be necessary that thou shouldest be taken from thy self, and all worldly things, that thou mightest serve thy God. But besides, diseases

2. We cannot reasonably look upon him as a hard Master, who submitted himself to that which he has imposed upon us, being himself the greatest example of Self-denial, and Forsaking all, that ever was. What thinkest thou of his Appearing in our frail flesh, of his low estate in the World, of his Pain and Travail, of his Thorny Crown and Cross? Was there not Self-denial in all this, and such as Angels and men may justly wonder and be astonished at for ever? He, *who being in the form of God, thought it no Robbery to be equal with God, made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of a man,*

and

and being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross. Phil. 2, 6, 7, 8. He, who might have commanded all the riches, and glory of the World, as being Lord of all, *became poor, that by his poverty we might be made rich*, 2. *Corinth.* 8. 9. He, who made all mankind to serve and please him, *Pleased not himself*, but became a servant for our Good, *Rom.* 15. *v.* 3. He, who could have had more than twelve *Legions of Angels for his Guard Math.* 26, 53. yeilded his cheeks to be smitten, his Face to be spit upon, his back to be scourged, his hands and feet to be nailed to an infamous Tree, and his side and heart to be pierced by the Vilest Sinners, whom with one word of his mouth he might have turn'd into Hell. Thus did our great and good Master deny himself, and forsake all: and can we poor worthless wretches think it much to deny our Vile selves, and to forsake those little things, which we call our own, for his sake, and in obedience to his command? had he dealt with us, as those that once Sate in Moses's Chair did with their Disciples, *laying heavy burdens upon them, and grievous to be born, which they themselves would not touch with one of their fingers Math.* 23, 4. we might have had some seeming

seeming cause of complaint: but, since he himself hath born the burden, which he hath layd upon us, yea, and a far greater, we are most unreasonable people, if we do open our mouths against him: he is too soft and delicate a servant surely that would fare better than his Lord, or be exempted from that work, which his Lord disdaineth not to put his hand unto. But,

3. I beseech thee, Brother, tell me what it is which thou Judgest hard and unreasonable in this Commandment. Is it that we should believe our selves to be what we really are, and that we should demean our selves in the World accordingly? Is it that we who do own our selves to be nothing of our selves, and to have nothing of our selves, should be as nothing to our selves, and challenge no propriety in our Selves, but in Subordination to him of whom we are, and from whom we have received all? Is it that he who hath made us for himself, and without any other motive than that was in himself, and who hath freely given us all we do possess, will dispose of us and all according to his Pleasure? Is it that we should prefer him before our selves and his Will before our own, and be ready and willing to part with all that he hath given us, when ever he is pleased to call for it? Is it

it that we ſhould be content to receive Evil from him as well as Good, when he ſhall ſee it fit for his own Glory and our greater Good? I dare ſay that there is nothing in all this, that thou wilt except againſt; and this is all that is required of thee. But yet further;

4. Suppoſe it appear after all, that what is here required, is not only juſt and reaſonable, but hugely Profitable, and advantageous for us; may we not juſtly look upon them to be very unreaſonable, that do quarrel with it? And truly thus it is and thus it will appear to be, upon very little conſideration; It is no ſmall advantage, to be at liberty to Obey God entirely, and to be able to doe it, with eaſe, with delight and pleaſure: it is no little benefit to be out of the Reach of the Devils malice, and of all thoſe Dangerous weapons wherewith he aſſaults and deſtroys poor Souls. And this we ſhall Infallibly obtain by the practice and performance of this one Duty. For what is it, that indiſpoſes us to the ſervice of God, that makes his Righteous & Holy Laws to be grievous and uneaſy to us, but our Taking upon us to be ſomething of our ſelves, and to diſpoſe of our ſelves according to our own wills? What is it that gives the Devil ſo much

much advantage over us, but our diſorderly paſſions and affections? and whence have all his Temptations their Force and Power, and all his Artifices their Succeſs, but from our inordinate Love of our ſelves and theſe Worldly things? And therefore when we have put off this Love, and baniſhed theſe things our hearts, as we are taught to do, we have Diſarmed our Enemy, or taken off the edge of all his weapons; we have baffled his accurſed policies, and ſecured our ſelves from his Devices. Men may talk of riches, and honours and fleſhly pleaſures, as long as they pleaſe, to thoſe that are dead; and they may threaten them with reproaches and pains, and other evil things, till they have wearied themſelves, and not find Them moved in the leaſt with it: and no leſs unmoveable ſhall we be, to all the temptations of the Devil, if we be but perfectly mortified and reſigned. Theſe are great advantages; but there is yet one more, no leſs conſiderable in the eſteem of ſome men, viz. that this will raiſe us up above all the Troubles, perplexities and ſorrows of this miſerable World, ſo that let what will come upon us here, it ſhall never be able to hurt us. For whence have all the evil things of the World (as we are wont to call them) their Sting and edge, but from our unrenounced

ſelves,

ſelves, our unmortified luſts and paſſions? we will be ſomething, we will do every thing, and every thing muſt be as we will have it; but in the event we find we are nothing, and that we can do nothing, and the ſtubborn things will not comply with with us; and therefore we are troubled, we are in pain, we are overwhelmed with grief and ſorrow. This is an Evil that hath no Remedy but Self-Denial, and reſignation to God; and this is a Remedy that never fails. When we have put off our ſelves, as we ought, and diſengaged our affections from all earthly things, and can give God leave to diſpoſe of his own Creatures, and to govern his own World: then we ſhall be in Peace, then we ſhall be happy, and not till then; then nothing can go againſt us, becauſe we ſhall be willing to comply with every thing. By this time I hope I have perfectly reconciled thee to this Duty, and that thou art reſolved to put it in Practice. It remains now that I ſhew thee, as briefly as may be, how to do it. And,

§. 3. Becauſe thou wilt certainly meet with many and great difficulties in thy firſt Endeavours, and the difficulties will be the more and the greater, by how much the more thou haſt loved thy Self, and the World formerly, and haſt

haſt been accuſtomed to pleaſe thy ſelf, and to indulge thy affections; it will be neceſſary,

1. That thou enter upon the Practice of it, with the ſtrongeſt convictions that poſſibly can be, both of the neceſſity, and reaſonableneſs of it: and that thou arm thy ſelf with ſuch conſiderations as may beat down all oppoſition, and effectually encourage thee againſt all the difficulties thou can'ſt encounter with. To this purpoſe thou may'ſt make Uſe of all that I have already ſaid, and of many other things, which my Deſign will not permit me to give an account of. And after this manner may'ſt thou diſcourſe with thy own heart concerning it: 'I am told, That I muſt deny my 'ſelf, and forſake the World, and take up 'my Croſs, if I will be a true Chriſtian: I am 'told it by Chriſt himſelf, and if I do not 'believe him, why do I call him my Lord, 'and profeſs to truſt in him as my Saviour? 'I know that his words have been confirm-'ed, and are confirmed dayly by a thouſand 'Inſtances: nay, I my ſelf am an unhappy In-'ſtance of the truth of them, having made 'but little progreſs in Chriſtian knowledge, 'and leſs in Chriſtian vertue, meerly for 'Want of a ſerious Regard unto them. 'But if I do believe them, why 'do I not practiſe accordingly? Does not

'my

'my everlasting happiness depend upon my
'being a Christian indeed; and can I rea-
'sonably stick at any thing that is needful for
'the securing my self of that? Is it fit that such
'a poor derivative thing as I am, should take
'upon me to be absolute and independent?
'What have I done for my self heretofore,
'and what can I do for my self hereafter,
'that I should presume to please my self, or
'seek my self in any thing? I cannot add
'one Inch to my Stature, I cannot make one
'hair white or black, I cannot do my self
'the least Good, nor remove from my self
'the lightest Evil; and shall I take upon me
'to do my own Will without respect to him,
'by whom alone I am, and without whose
'influence and Blessing I can do nothing?
'And what is the World that I should set my
'heart upon it, and prefer it before my God
'and Saviour? did my Love of it ever do
'me any Good; or will it do me any without
'God's Blessing, or when I am to leave it
'that I should cleave at present so closeunto
'it? I know that it is God alone that give
'me any portion in it, that gives me any com-
'fort by it, and I Know that he can deprive
'me of both, when he pleases; And there-
'fore I shall be, not only a Rebel, but a fool
'if I resign not my self and it to him, and
'say not, whatever is laid upon me *It is the*
Lord

'*Lord, let him do whatſoever ſeemeth good un-*
'*to him.* Come therefore, O my heart, let
'us be no longer Rebels againſt Heaven, and
'enemies to our own Happineſs: we are not
'our own, we are not the World's, but we
'are God's, we are Chriſt's, and therefore
'let God diſpoſe of us as he will, and let
'him give thoſe worldly things to whom he
'pleaſes, ſo that we may have his favour, and
'enjoy it for ever. O naughty ſelf! how do I
'deteſt thee, for taking ſo much upon thee, as
'thou haſt done hitherto? O vain, O tranſitory
'World! I abhor thee, I renounce thee utterly:
'court me no more with thy ſottiſh Pleaſures,
'with thy glittering bravery, with thy deceit-
'ful Shows; I am now dying, and I will be for
'ever dead unto thee, that I may follow
'Chriſt, and live unto my God. Favour
'theſe good deſires, favour them with
'thy Grace, O my God, and ſuffer not a
'Soul, that earneſtly aſpires towards thee,
'to fall ſhort of thee. With theſe and ſuch
like thoughts, thou wilt do well to enter upon the Practice of this duty. But then, I adviſe thee,

2. To do as much as thou can'ſt, to keep theſe and the like thoughts continually in thy mind. However, fail not to begin every day with them. When thou firſt beholdeſt the light in the morning, after thou

haſt ſent up thy heart to God in ſome ſhort acknowledgments of his mercy towards thee, tell thy heart, That thou haſt by God's goodneſs another day added to thy life, which thou muſt imploy for him and his ſervice, who hath beſtowed it on thee, and not for the pleaſing of thy ſelf and the ſatisfying of thy Luſts; and charge it, as it will anſwer for it at the great day, that it take care to do it accordingly. The like thoughts and reſolutions will do well again about noon, and indeed at any time of the day, and the oftner they return into thy mind, the more eaſily and ſpeedily wilt thou come to that perfect reſignation, which thou art concerned to aim at. But yet further,

3. It will behove thee to be frequent in Exerciſes of Mortification and Self-Denyal. Reſtrain thy wonted Liberties, and deny thy ſelf thy accuſtomed Satisfactions; acquaint thy ſelf ſometimes with hardſhips, and turn not alwayes away from ſufferings, remembring that thou art a Soldier under the Enſign of the Croſs, and therefore muſt not be nice and tender, ſoft and delicate. Mortifie thy Senſes, and accuſtome them to thoſe things that are leaſt agreeable, knowing that there are ſome offices to be done ſometimes by a Chriſtian, ſuch as viſiting poor priſoners, and dreſſing of poor peoples Sores, &c.

Which

Which men of a nice and ſqueamiſh ſenſe will hardly be perſuaded to perform. Mortify thy paſſions likewiſe, and keep them ſtrictly within their bounds; for as he is a beaſt that is a ſlave to Senſe, ſo is he a Fool that is governed by his Paſſions. In one word, conſider thy ſelf well, mark thy Temper, thy Inclinations and affections, and keep thy ſelf and them under conſtant diſcipline and correction. Haſt thou a trifling wanton ſpirit? art thou much delighted with the Ralleries, Drolleries, Sportings and Jeſtings of wanton Fancies and looſe tongues? fail not, I beſeech thee, to reſtrain thy inclinations; avoid the company of light and vain perſons, and turn away thy thoughts from trivial matters, to the concernments of a Soul that muſt ſhortly appear before the Bar of a juſt and holy God; remembring that the Maſter whom thou profeſſeſt to ſerve, was a ſerious, grave, and uſeful perſon, and not a Buffoon, or Stage-player. It was the grief of a devout man many years agone [St. *Bernard*] to obſerve the lightneſs, laughter, and ſecurity of many Chriſtians, and his continual fear that he ſhould ſee them forſaken of the Divine Grace, of which they ſhewed themſelves to be unmindful. What Grief, what Fear, do'ſt thou think, would have poſſeſſed his heart, if he had li-

ved in this Age, and had been a witneſs of our vanity in this kind? we live in a merry World at preſent, and nothing is ſacred or weighty enough to eſcape our Sportings: but believe it, God will ſhortly ſpoil our vain mirth, and make us ſerious whether we will or not. Artthou ſoft & ſlothful, inclined to ſenſuality and voluptuouſneſs? rouſe up thy ſelf, and be alwayes doing, take up with coarſe Fare, faſt often, lye hard, go frequently to the houſe of Mourning, and keep him continually in thine Eye, who, after a life of continued travel in doing Good, had no eaſier a bed than a Croſs to reſt upon. Do the Riches of the World pleaſe thee? refuſe them when they are offered, or let the hand of liberality immediately diſtribute them, to thoſe that want them; and keep in mind thoſe good men, whom thy Bible tells thee of, who, though they could have enriched themſelves by miracles, yet continued poor, and had not ſo much as an houſe to put their heads in. Do wordly Honours tickle thee, and the Applauſes of men delight thee? Retire from publick employments, and hide thy ſelf in the meanneſs and obſcurity of a Countrey-life; be exact and open in the Practice of thoſe Virtues which are moſt unfaſhionable, and which the generality of men have a mean opinion of; and forget not, That there

was a person once in the World, who was able to have governed the whole World, that lead the greatest part of his Life in the Countrey-Villages, and among poor people, and would not have his great and mighty works to be publickly spoken of. This is to practise Self-Denyal; and by these and the like Practices, thou wilt in a short time arrive at that perfect resignation, to which I desire to lead thee. But then in the last place,

4. Be sure, That in these Practices, and in whatever else thou do'st, thou take nothing to thy self; but refer thy self and all to Almighty God. Thou may'st begin well, my Brother, *viz.* in renouncing thy self, and yet may'st end ill, *viz.* in that very self, which thou did'st at first renounce: and this thou do'st, if thou do'st do these things for the satisfaction of thy self, and seekest thy own Glory in them. Forget not therefore this last advice; 'tis not for thy self, but for God, that thou must be thus imployed; that thou may'st be entirely resigned to God, and be for ever united with God. Thou must be as nothing to thy self, and the World must be as nothing to thee, that God may be all in all. Therefore I advise thee in the third place,

CHAP. III.

Sect. 1. *Containing a Third Advice, to give up our ſelves Souls and Bodies intirely to God, with ſeveral Arguments to perſuade us to it.*

Sect. 2. *Containing ſeveral Directions how to put this Advice of giving our ſelves to God, in Practice.*

§. 1. *TO give up thy ſelf, thy Soul and Body, all the faculties of the one, and all the members of the other, together with all thou haſt in the World, wholly and entirely to God through Chriſt Jeſus, uniting thy ſelf to him in the cloſeſt manner, and by the ſtrongeſt bonds that poſſibly thou can'ſt, reſolving to be his, and only his for ever.* To make thee capable of doing this, was the deſign of my former Advice, and if thou can'ſt practiſe that well, thou wilt readily follow this: for thoſe bonds being broken which kept thee from God, thou wilt as naturally incline to him, as fire does aſcend upwards, when that which depreſſes it, or keeps it down, is removed from it; and therefore, the

the fewer words may ſerve to enforce this Advice upon thee. The heads of ſome few conſiderations I ſhall briefly offer thee, which thy own Thoughts may work upon, and enlarge as thou ſeeſt good. In the firſt place then,

1. Thou muſt and do'ſt acknowledge thy ſelf to be God's Creature. He is the only Spring and Root of thy Being and Life. And is it not juſt then, that thou ſhouldeſt be and live to him, and to him alone? Art thou not a very unreaſonable Creature, if thou refuſeſt to be his, by whom alone thou art, and without whom thou can'ſt not be at all? Yes ſurely.

2. Thou muſt acknowledge God to be the only Supporter, Preſerver, and Maintainer of thy Life and Being; thou liveſt by him as ſurely, as the Tree by its Root, and if he withdraw his quickening Influence and Power but one Moment, thou art dead without Remedy. Thoſe Neceſſaries for the preſerving of life, which the World furniſhes thee withal, are all fallen from him; and all the virtue and efficacie they have for that purpoſe, is no leſs from him. It is he that refreſhes thee by Heat and Light, that nouriſhes thee by Meat and Drink, that cures thee by Medicine and Phyſick, and without him thou could'ſt have no Nouriſh-

ment, no Health, no Refreſhment. And with what Reaſon, then, can'ſt thou withhold thy ſelf from him? Surely with none at all.

3. thou believeſt God to be thy Saviour, *i. e.* that he hath given thee his only begotten Son to deliver thee from Sin and Death, and to bring thee to everlaſting Life; and that as he in our Nature hath offered up himſelf a Sacrifice upon the Croſs for thy Sins, ſo he hath undertaken to bring back thy erring and loſt Soul to God. And therefore thou art a moſt unworthy and ungrateſull wretch, if thou wilt not comply with his gracious Undertaking, but refuſeſt to be Chriſt's, that thou may'ſt be God's for ever.

4. Thou do'ſt believe and acknowledge, that for this End he hath taken Poſſeſſion of thee by his Holy Spirit, who is continually working in thee, to diſpoſe thee by putting off thy ſelf, and all ſelfiſh Inclinations and Deſires, and by abandoning all that is dear to thee, to offer up thy ſelf, as *Abraham* offered up his *Iſaac*, a Sacrifice unto God. And therefore thou can'ſt not without the Guilt of the moſt abominable Sacrilege, take upon thee to be any thing, or to do any thing, but for God, and to God. See 1. *Corinth.* 6. 19, 20.

5. Thou

5. Thou haſt made a Show, an outward profeſſion of giving up thy ſelf to God, and being God's long agoe, This thou did'ſt at thy Baptiſme, when renouncing the Devil, the World, and the Fleſh, thou did'ſt give up thy ſelf to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt; and this profeſſion thou haſt (probably) renewed often at the table of the Lord, where commemorating, and giving thanks to God for the greateſt expreſſion of the greateſt Love to Man that ever was, *thou did'ſt offer and preſent thy ſelf, thy Soul and Body to be a Reaſonable, Holy, and Lively Sacrifice to the Lord*; and thou haſt ſeemed to the World to this very day, to own all this. And therefore, if thou art not, if thou wilt not be God's, after all this, by the full conſent of thy heart, thou art the falſeſt, and vileſt Hypocrite upon Earth, and an accurſed Traytor to thy great Creator, to thy Gracious and Loving Saviour. To all this thou may'ſt add,

6. That this is that Holineſs, which the Scriptures ſo frequently recommend unto thee, and without which thou can'ſt not hope to ſee the Lord. When things are ſeparated from common Uſes, and are given up to God ſo, as never to be made Uſe of, but for him, or in his Worſhip and Service, they

they are called Holy things; and ſo indeed they are, ſo far as things can be: Thus when thou haſt ſeparated thy ſelf, taken off thy heart from all created things, and haſt given up thy ſelf to God, to be his, and only his, in faithful Service and Obedience for ever, thou art holy, and not till then; and if thou thinkeſt otherwiſe, thou do'ſt dangerouſly deceive thy ſelf. Add to this,

7. That this is thy perfection, and the greateſt perfection thou art capable of. Thou can'ſt do nothing better, than to reſign thy ſelf to God; and thou can'ſt not poſſibly be in any better State, than in a State of pure reſignation to him. And therefore in the laſt place,

8. Thou may'ſt ſafely believe, that this is thy happineſs, and the greateſt happineſs thou can'ſt attain unto. The truth is, theſe three words, Holineſs, Perfection, and Happineſs, though they differ in ſound, are all the very ſame in ſence and ſignification. He that ſaies, that the Saints in Heaven are bleſſed, ſaies no other thing than this, that they are made perfect; and he that ſaies, that they are made perfect, ſaies no other, thing than this that they are fully & compleatly Holy: and he that ſpeaks this, ſaies no more, then

than that they are entirely God's, that they are perfectly disengaged from every thing that might withhold them in the least from him, and so united to him, that nothing can separate or dissolve the Union; so that all that I would now persuade thee to, is but to make thy self as perfect, and happy as thou can'st be: and methinks in this case it should be no hard matter to prevail with thee, when thou can'st not but see thy Interest in that which is recommended to thee as thy Duty, it is impossible, if thou art the Man I now suppose thee to be, but thou must yield thy full Consent unto it. And therefore I leave these things to thy serious thoughts, and proceed to give thee some Directions how to perform this good and happy Work.

§. 2. That thou art concerned to take the greatest Care that may be, to do it well, I presume I need not tell thee; and therefore, as I do earnestly recommend the following Directions to thee, so, I hope thou wilt not fail to practise them. And because it is a matter of great moment in every thing to begin well, I advise thee,

1. To separate thy self for some time from the World. Retire into thy Closet, or into some secret place, where no Eye may see

ſee thee, and nothing divert or diſturb thee. And when thou art there, conſider, that thou art come thither about a buſineſs of the greateſt Importance to thee; thou art to give thy ſelf to God, to unite thy ſelf moſt firmly to him; but of thy ſelf, and without God's ſpecial Grace thou art not able to do it: if he does not draw thee, if he does not overcome thy ſorry Heart by the ſweet and powerful Influences of his Love, thou wilt make but faint and fained Offers of thy ſelf unto him. And therefore thou muſt not fail in the firſt place,

1. To fall upon thy Senſes, and with the greateſt Reverence and Submiſſion, to acquaint him with the Deſires of thy Soul, and to beg his favourable acceptance of them, and his Bleſſing upon them. And if thou knoweſt not how to do it better, thou may'ſt make Uſe of this form of words:

'My Lord, and my God, thou knoweſt 'the very bottom of my heart, and my De- 'ſires are not hid from thee: I am encoura- 'ged by my own happy experience of thy 'Goodneſs, as well as by thy gracious decla- 'rations of thy Will, to preſent my ſelf be- 'fore thee, notwithſtanding I know my ſelf 'to be unworthy of the leaſt Favour from thee,

'thee. I am ashamed when I think how I
'have demeaned my self hitherto towards
'thee; and that I have lived so long a Stranger,
'yea an Enemy to thee, taking upon me to
'dispose of my self, and to please my self in
'the main Course of my Life, without the
'least Regard to thee. I abhor my self for
'it, and acknowledge that I deserve for ever
'to be abandoned by thee; but thou hast
not dealt with me according to my deserts,
'blessed be thy Goodness for it; and there-
'fore, I now desire unfeignedly to return un-
'to thee, and renouncing all Interest and Pro-
'priety in my self, and detesting all my for-
'mer ungodly Practices, I desire to give up
'my self wholly and entirely to thee: I
'would be thine, and only thine, in all Love
'and Service, in perfect Submission and Obe-
'dience for ever; but, I know I am nothing,
'and can do nothing of my self, and if ever
'I am thine, as I desire to be, I must be in-
'debted wholly to thy Goodnes for it. O
'my God, my Saviour, and my Sanctifier,
'turn not away thy face from a poor Soul
'that seeks thee, and places all his Confi-
'dence and Comfort in thee: but as thou
'hast kindled these good Desires in my
'heart; so favour them with thy Blessing,
'and confirm, encrease, and ~~satisfie~~ them. Sanctifye
'Reject not that poor Gift, which I would
'make

'make of my ſelf unto thee, and enable me 'to make it in ſuch a manner, that it may 'be pleaſing and acceptable in thy ſight. Lord 'hear me, help me, and ſhew mercy to me, 'for Chriſt Jeſus's ſake, Amen.

When thou haſt thus offered thy Deſires to God, riſe from thy knees, and either walking or ſitting, as thou thinkeſt beſt,

2. Begin to excite, and ſtir up thy Soul, to a perfect Surrender of it ſelf, by the Arguments before laid down, preſſing them upon thy ſelf with all thy Might. And that they may have as great an Influence upon thee as is poſſible, thou may'ſt imagine, that thou heareſt Almighty God ſpeaking to thee from Heaven in this manner: 'Conſider thy ſelf, O man, and take notice 'what thou art, and what good Things thou 'do'ſt poſſeſs; look upon thy body, and all its 'uſeful Members; conſider thy Soul, 'and all its Faculties and Powers, and obſerve their ſeveral Motions and Operations; 'and tell me whence thou art, and to whom 'thou art endebted for them. Look upon 'the World that furniſhes thee with all things 'neceſſary and fitting for thee; and tell me 'who was the framer of it, and who made 'it uſeful and ſerviceable to thee. Can'ſt 'thou

'thou deny, that I have done all this? and
'wherefore, then, hast thou lifted up thy self
'against me, and presumed to act, as if thou
'had'st no dependance upon me, or obliga-
'tion to me? If thou sowest thy seed in thy
'Field, thou expectest to reap the Crop; if
'thou did'st nourish, and provide for a poor
'beast, thou thinkest that thou may'st use
'him at thy pleasure; if thou makest an In-
'strument to work withal, thou challengest
'a Right to dispose of it; But I have main-
'tained, and preserved a creature, [*hear and*
'*be ashamed of thy self*] and thou wilt allow
'me no Right and Title to Him and his Ser-
'vice. Tell me O thou unjust, and ungrate-
'full Wretch, did I ever give thee Liberty
'to dispose of thy self? did I ever give thee
'occasion to think, that I made no reckon-
'ing of thee, or that I expected no acknow-
'ledgment from thee? No, wretched crea-
'ture, thou did'st know that I made thee for
'my self, and that I would not give away
'my Interest in thee; that I put a great Va-
'lue upon thee, and that as I made thee ca-
'pable of Serving me, so I expected and desi-
'red it from thee: and therefore did I love
'thee from the Beginning, and bestowed in-
'numerable Gifts upon thee: I gave thee all
'things that were fitting for thee, and as-
'sured thee, that I would withhold no good
'thing

'thing from thee: yea, I gave thee my self
'in mine own only begotten Son, who de-
'ſcended out of my boſome to aſſure thee of
'my Love, as well as to convince thee, That
'thou had'ſt deſerved my hatred, Thou can'ſt
'rage againſt a poor ſervant that neglects thy
'Buſineſs, and ſeems to ſlight thee; yea, thy
'poor neighbour, that hath no dependance
'upon thee, ſhall feel the effects of thy diſplea-
'ſure, if he chance to wrong thee: they
'muſt ſeek thy pardon and crouch before
'thee, and think themſelves beholden to thee,
'if by ſo doing they can make their peace:
'and yet I have humbled my ſelf to thee, thou
'vile worme, and have not ſpared my own
'Son that I might ſpare thee, and bring
'thee to a due ſenſe of thy duty to me. Hea-
'ven and Earth can witneſs for me, that I have
'ſtooped low enough, in deſiring the friend-
'ſhip of Rebellious Duſt and aſhes; and they
'ſhall alſo witneſs the Juſtice of my ſeverity
'to thee, if ſo much Love and Condeſcenſi-
'on will not work upon thee. Here thou
may'ſt pauſe a while, and obſerve how thy
Soul is affected with theſe things; and then
thou may'ſt imagine again, That thou heareſt
Almighty God ſpeaking further to thee and
more fully relating the wonderfull Hiſtory
of his Love in Chriſt Jeſus. And after he hath
given thee an account of his mean Birth,

of

of his humble and painful Life, of his bloody and cruel death, and his Design and End in all this, proceeding to shew thee, with how much Love, and with what tender Regard for thee he left this World, and ascended to his Father: and how, that after he had done, and suffered in his own Person, as much as was necessary and fitting for him; he sent the Holy Ghost to compleat the great and good work of thy eternal Salvation. And then imagine that he tells thee, what that blessed and Holy Spirit hath for his part done for thee, what Gifts he hath bestowed, what Wonders he hath wrought, what Arts and Methods he hath used, and with what Goodness and Patience, and Long-suffering, to bring thee to a right Understanding, and a real sense of all his Love, and of all thy Duty to him; and to excite, encourage, and enable thee to the performance of it: and in the End bespeaking thee in this or the like manner: 'And now, 'wretch that thou art, must all this Love 'be lost upon thee: and must I lose thee for 'ever, after all that I have done for thee; 'will nothing work upon thy hard heart; 'upon thy proud and stubborn Will; will 'nothing conquer the perverseness of thy 'Spirit? not the Commands of thy 'Maker, not the Death of thy Saviour:

'not the good motions and Inſpirations, of 'thy Sanctifier? Can'ſt thou withſtand my 'Power, that thou art thus obſtinate againſt 'my Goodneſs? and if thou wilt not ſuffer 'me to ſave thee, do'ſt thou think that I am 'not able to deſtroy thee? O fooliſh Crea-'ture and unwiſe! conſider theſe things ſe-'riouſly, and as thou oughteſt; remember 'what thou haſt done, and what unreaſona-'ble Courſes thou haſt taken hitherto, and 'proceed no farther in thy Folly, but return 'to that Love that calls thee, that entreats 'thee, that would ſave thee. Here thou may'ſt pauſe a little, as before: and if any thing more be neceſſary, to ſhame and humble thee, to ſoften and melt thee: Thou may'ſt turn thy ſelf to conſider thy own Engagements, and to charge upon thy ſelf that monſtrous perfidiouſneſs which thou haſt, and wilt continue to be guilty of, if thou doſt now withſtand the Calls of God. And that thy perfidiouſneſs may appear the more deteſtable, thou may'ſt conſider in the laſt place, what that is which thou haſt been engaged, and art now called upon to do, it is not to do any thing unjuſt; diſhoneſt or unreaſonable: it is not to deſtroy thy ſelf, or to make thy ſelf miſerable: but on the contrary, it is to do the juſteſt, the moſt reaſonable and the beſt thing that thou art capable of doing:

it

it is to return to the Author of thy Being, and thereby ſerve the End of thy creation, and conſult the only Happineſs, and Reſt of thy Soul: it is to unite thy ſelf to the Supreme Good, to make thy ſelf his, and to make him thine for ever. And is this a thing ſo much againſt thee, that thou needeſt ſo much invitation and perſuaſion to it? O my 'Soul! my fooliſh Soul, may'ſt thou ſay, 'what can'ſt thou ſay for thy ſelf in this 'Caſe? is there any Excuſe for thy Folly? any 'plea for thy Wickedneſs? no, far be it from 'thee to ſeek for any: let us rather amend 'what we have done amiſs, and be more 'wiſe for the time to come. Happy had 'we been, if we had needed from the Begin-'ning, ſo much invitation to deſtroy our 'ſelves; but ſince we could do that upon 'very little or none at all, let us no longer 'withſtand this which is ſo earneſt and im-'portunate with us to ſave our ſelves. Then turning thy ſelf to God, (in whoſe preſence thou haſt been all this while) thou may'ſt ſpeak (as I hope thou wilt be able with truth to do) in this manner to him: 'I am over-'come, I am overcome, O God, I can no 'longer withſtand thy mighty Love; I muſt, 'I do yield my ſelf a captive to it. I am 'thine, I do acknowledge by all Right, and 'I will be thine for ever, by the full conſent

'of my Heart. I can do no leſs in Return 'to that wonderful Love thou haſt ſhewed 'me; and I can do no more. O, let this 'little that I can do, be accepted by thee, 'and receive me for thine own: take poſſeſ-'ſion of me by thy Spirit, and let it preſerve 'me for ever to thy ſelf, according as I do 'now ſincerely reſign up my ſelf, and all I 'have to thee. Then,

3. Caſting thy ſelf upon the Ground, ſay thus: and ſay it with all thy Heart and Soul:

'To God the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt, 'my Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier, do I 'give my Self Soul and Body, and all that 'belongs unto me, to be guided, governed, 'and diſpoſed of according to his Will, and 'to his Honour and Glory, and may he be 'a Witneſs to this my Act, which I promiſe 'never to revoke, and may I never obtain the 'leaſt Favour from him, if I do it not with 'with an upright Heart, and an unfeigned 'purpoſe to make it good to my Lives End. 'Thou art my Witneſs, O my God, be thour 'alſo my helper with thy continued Grace, 'and ſo ſhall I be faithful to thee according 'to my Heart's Deſire. *Amen, Amen.*

But

But then,

4. As in matters of the World, that which is done in private between Man and Man, muſt in ſome caſes receive a further Confirmation, by ſuch Solemnities as are appointed by humane Lawes; ſo that which thou haſt done thus between God, and thy own Soul, muſt be farther confirmed, and as it were compleated, by thoſe Solemnities which the Lawes of God do require; and therefore fail not to take the firſt opportunity that is offered thee to go to the Table of the Lord; and having prepared thy ſelf at home by ſuch meditations as I have before taught thee, and by reading ſome good book of the Holy Sacrament, (ſuch as Dr. *Patrick*'s Chriſtian Sacrifice, which I deſire, may find a place, both in thy Cloſet and in thy Heart) do thou there renew what thou haſt done in private, and as it were in publick Court, avow it and confirm it. At that Holy Table God will not fail to meet thee, attended with an innumerable Company of Holy Angels, and he ſtrictly requires and expects it from thee. And therefore, when thou art at that Table, and beholdeſt what manner of Love is there ſhewed thee, and which cannot but draw thy very heart from thee, if thou do'ſt conſider it aright, remember what thou art to do, and let thy heart ſpeak

in this manner to Almighty God: 'There is all the Reason in the World, O Heavenly Father, that I should give up my self entirely to thee, since thou hast not withholden thy Son, thy only Son from me; there is all the Reason in the World, O my Blessed Saviour, that I should surrender my self, and all I have, into thy hands, since thou did'st offer thy self a Sacrifice upon the Cross for me, and do'st now offer these Holy Pledges, of the all-sufficient Virtue of that Sacrifice to me: there is all the Reason in the World, that I should resign my self to thee, O Holy and Blessed Spirit, since thou do'st offer thy self to be a Principle of Holiness and Life in me. And therefore, as I do now accept, with all thankfulness, those great and inestimable Favours, and do declare my acceptance of them in the sight of these thy Servants, and all thy Holy Angels here present, by receiving those Tokens and Pledges of them, according to thy Command and Institution; so, do I give up my self and all I have to thee, and declare it before the face of all these Witnesses; and I earnestly desire, that even my unworthy self may be accepted through this my poor Gift, the perfect Sacrifice and Oblation of my dearest Saviour, and be sanctified by the Holy Ghost, and be owned by my

That this my poor Gift, even my unworthy self, may be accepted through the perfect Sacrifice &c.

'my God, to the everlasting praise of the 'Holy, Blessed, and Undivided Trinity, 'whose I am, and whose I will be for ever, 'and ever. *Amen, Amen.*

But then,

5. When thou art gone from this holy Table, Retire as soon as possibly thou can'st, and whil'st these good thoughts are warm in thy breast, into thy Closet: and there take the Book of thy spiritual Accounts into thy hand, (for I would not have thee to be without such a Book, for recording these things wherein the Welfare of thy Soul is greatly concerned, least thou be condemned by the Care, and exactness of those whom we are wont to call good Husbands, in Worldly Matters) and with thy pen write thus: 'In 'such a Year and such a Month, and on such 'a day, I did through God's Grace, with all 'the Devotion of my Heart, and Soul, make 'an entire Surrender of my self, and all 'things belonging to me, to Almighty God; 'protesting and vowing, that he should have 'the full guiding, governing, and disposing 'of me, and mine for ever. And then, that thou may'st have a more distinct Understanding of what thou hast done, and what thou art obliged to do for the time to come, thou may'st under-write these following particulars, *viz.*

'I have given up my ſelf entirely to God; 'and therefore I muſt not ſerve my ſelf, but 'Him all the dayes of my Life.

'I have given him my Underſtanding: 'and therefore my chiefeſt Care and Study 'muſt be to know him, his Nature, his 'Perfections, his Works, his Will: Theſe 'muſt be the Subject of my Meditations 'night and day; as for all other things they 'muſt be as Droſs and Dung to me; *and 'the Knowledge of them muſt be as loſs for 'the excellency of the Knowledge of God in 'Chriſt*, *Phil.* 3.8. *v.* I muſt believe all his Re-'velations, and, ſilencing all the carnal Reaſon-'ings againſt whatſoever he teaches me, I muſt 'reſt my ſelf on his veracity, being fully per-'ſuaded that he can neither be deceived him-'ſelf, nor deceive me. See *Rom.* 4. 19, 20.

'have given him my Will: and therefore, 'I muſt have no Will of mine own: what-'ever he wills, I muſt will alſo; I muſt will 'his Glory in all things, as he does, and that 'muſt be my chief End in every thing: I 'muſt prefer it before all deſireable things, 'and ſubordinate my own Deſires, Delights 'and Satisfactions to it: I muſt ſay, as the 'Pſalmiſt did, *Whom have I in Heaven but 'thee? and there is none upon earth, that I 'deſire beſides thee*, *Pſal.* 73. 25. I muſt 'do whatſoever God commands me, and

'for-

'forbear whatever he forbids; and I must do 'it for this Reason chiefly, because he does 'command or forbid me: nay, *I must 'delight to do it, Psal.* 40. 8. *v.* And it must 'be to me *as my meat and drink, John* 4. 34. 'I must consent to suffer whatever he will 'lay upon me, and though it may be his 'Pleasure to lay hard things upon me, and 'grievous to be born, yet I must not repine, 'or murmur, but with Cheerfulness, Ala-'crity and Thankfulness, I will submit my 'self to it. Whatever threatens me, I must 'say, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth 'him good,* 1. Sam. 3. 18. and whatever be-'falls me, I *must give thanks, for that is his 'Will concerning me in Christ Jesus,* 1. *Thes.* '5. 18.

'I have given him all the Passions, and 'Affections of my Soul; and therefore he 'must dispose of them, govern, and set bounds 'unto them. he must have my Love, my 'Fear, my Delight, my Joy; and nothing 'in the World must have any Share in these, 'or any other of my Affections, but with 'respect to him, and for his sake. What he 'loves, I must love; what he hates, I must 'hate; what he is well pleased with, I must 'rejoyce in; what he is grieved with, I must 'mourn for; the Objects of his Pity I must have 'compassion on, and those of his wrath and

Indig-

'Indignation I must be zealous against: and 'all in such measures, and Degrees as he is 'pleased to prescribe me.

'I have given him my Body; and there-'fore, must glorify him with it: I must not 'dare to abuse it by Gluttony, Drunkenness, 'Adultery, Fornication, or any other Un-'cleanness: I must look upon it as his Tem-'ple, and therefore must preserve it pure 'and Holy, fit for my God to dwell in. See '1. *Corinth.* 6. 19. I must not wrong it by 'pampering or indulging it; nor by neg-'lecting, nor shewing too much Rigor to-'wards it, in overmuch fasting, watching, 'labouring, *&c.* But must keep it, as far as 'in me lies, Healthy, Vigorous, active, 'and fit to do him all manner of Service that 'he shall call for.

'I have given him my Senses, my Eyes, 'my Ears, *&c.* And therefore, to good 'they must be alwayes open, but to Evil, 'and all the Occasions of it, they must be 'shut.

'I have given him all my Members: and 'therefore they must be no longer Instru-'ments of Unrighteousness unto Sin, [*Rom.* '6. 13.] but Instruments of Righteousness 'unto God. My tongue must shew forth 'his Praise; my hands must do his Works; 'and my foot must carry me with speed unto 'it. 'I

'I have given him not my self only, but 'alſo all that do belong unto me; and 'therefore my Children my Friends, my 'Servants muſt all be his, if I can make them 'ſo.

'I have given him all my Worldly Goods; 'and therefore I muſt prize them, and uſe 'them only for him: his Houſe, his Prieſts, 'his Poor muſt have their Portions from me 'with a willing mind; and though I have 'no more than neceſſaries for my Life, yet 'I muſt be content to part with them, when 'my Lord ſhall need them, or command me 'to reſign them.

'I have given him my Credit, and Re-'putation; and therefore I muſt value it, 'and endeavour to maintain it only in Re-'ſpect to him, as it may do him ſervice, and 'advance his Honour in the World.

'I have given him my ſelf and all; and 'therefore I muſt look upon my ſelf to be 'nothing, and to have nothing out of him: 'he muſt be the ſole Diſpoſer, Governour, 'and Guider of my ſelf and all: He muſt be 'my Portion, and my All.

'And then, in the cloſe thou may'ſt add 'this:

'Thus have I given my ſelf to God, and 'and to all this have I bound my ſelf in the 'moſt ſolemn manner; and with my own hand

'hand do I now teſtify my full conſent unto
'it, and I am reſolved to make good the
'Whole, and every part of it, God aſſiſt-
'ing me, to my Lives End. I doubt not
'but I ſhall meet with many temptations to
'the Contrary, I ſhall be often told of my
'Singularity and Preciſeneſs, and ſome may
'tell me in kindneſs, that I do more than is
'neceſſary, and that I muſt accommodate
'or fit my ſelf to this or that perſon, Compa-
'ny, Thing, Cuſtome, &c. But my Anſwer
'ſhall be to all, I am not my own, I am not
'for my ſelf, nor for my Friends, nor for the
'World, nor for its Cuſtomes; but for my
'God. I will give to *Cæſar* what I owe to
'*Cæſar*; and to God what I owe to God.
'The Lord be merciful to me his unworthy
'Servant.'

All this I ſay thou wilt do well to write in thy Book of Spiritual Accounts; but if thou can'ſt not write ſail not to fix it in thy memory; and as often as thou art called to the table of the Lord, take a View of it, or repeat it to thy ſelf; and call thy ſelf ſtrictly to an account how thou haſt made it good, and how and wherein thou haſt failed; and give God thanks for what thou haſt been able to do, and humble thy ſelf before him for all that thou haſt omitted, confeſſing it with ſorrow, and earneſtly begging pardon for it

it, renewing thy Resolutions and vows, and imploring a greater measure of his grace to enable thee to do better for the time to come. But did I say, that thou must do this as often as thou art called to the Table of the Lord? I must tell thee, that thou should'st do it oftner: thou should'st do it once a week at least, upon the *Saturday* in the Evening, or early in the morning on the Lord's day; for, so often at least were the Primitive Christians wont to receive the Holy Sacrament, and that we do it not as often as they did, is not for our Praise or Commendation; and indeed to put of this, till our usual Times of Communicating, is to put it off to a time when we can hardly do it well; because many things will be forgotten by us, or else we shall be overwhelmed with too great a multitude. There is not one but will find Work enough at the End of one week, to call to mind, how his heart has been disposed, his tongue imployed, and what good or evil Deeds he hath done, with the several Circumstances belonging unto them, during that time; and how imperfect an Account of these things, then, can they give to themselves, and to Almighty God, who are to look back a full Quarter of a Year, and to call all their wayes to remembrance? let this therefore, I pray thee, at least as often be done

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as I have ſaid, and though thou can'ſt not be ſo happy, as to communicate thus often, yet this will in ſome meaſure ſupply the want of it, and put thee into a better diſpoſition, to give thy ſelf to God in the Holy Communion, and to unite thy ſelf more firmly to him. I muſt confeſs, I am not able to promiſe thee, but thou wilt diſcern many failings when thou comeſt thus to examine thy ſelf, though thou haſt been ever ſo careful, to keep cloſe to God, and to demean thy ſelf as God's: but yet, let not this diſcourage thee in the leaſt, becauſe thou haſt to do with a God that knows thy frailty, and abounds in Mercy and Compaſſion towards thee; and as long as thou do'ſt not withdraw thy heart from him, nor ſlack thy Endeavours to make good thy Reſolutions and Vowes, thou may'ſt reſt thy ſelf aſſured, that thou ſhalt not want the choiceſt Tokens of his Love, I mean a dayly Supply of Grace, and ſtrength to obey and pleaſe him. Thou may'ſt feel thy ſelf at firſt to be weak as a little Child; but be not diſmayed at it, for thou wilt find in a little time, that That Spirit which firſt breathed into thee this new life, will preſerve and cheriſh it, and make thee to *grow up to a perfect man, unto the meaſure of the Stature of the fulneſs of Chriſt. Epheſ.* 4. 13.

Thus

Thus have I ſhewed thee, (my dear Brother) how thou may'ſt become a real Chriſtian, *i. e.* in the Language of the Scripture, *a new Creature in Chriſt Jeſus* 2. *Corin.* 5. 17. And let me tell thee for thy Comfort, that when theſe things are done, thou may'ſt ſafely account thy ſelf to be one, and all thoſe Privileges, which the Holy Scriptures aſſure thee do belong to real Chriſtians, thou may'ſt juſtly challenge as belonging to thy ſelf. Are they one with Chriſt? ſo art thou. Have they the Spirit of Chriſt? ſo haſt thou. Have they fellowſhip with the Father and the Son? ſo haſt thou. Are they the Children of God, Heirs of God, and Coheirs with Chriſt? ſo art thou. This is an happy and Honourable Eſtate, no ambitious Soul can aim at any thing higher, no heart can deſire any thing better. It is that, to which all that call themſelves Chriſtians do pretend; but they, and they only, that have thus reſigned themſelves to God, have attained to it. But now I muſt tell thee, that by how much the greater thy happineſs is in this Eſtate, by ſo much the more thou art concerned to take Care that thou fall not away from it, and to uſe all diligence to keep thy ſelf in a firm poſſeſſion of it; remembring that thou art not yet in Heaven, where there is no Falling away from God.

God, but in a place of Manifold Temptations, where many do draw back, and after they *have known the way of Righteousness, do turn from it.* 1 *Pet.* 2. 21, for which purpose I must proceed to give thee some further Directions, but contracting my thoughts as much as may be, that I may not burden thee with too big a Book.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Sect. 1. *Containing the Fourth Advice, To grow in the Knowledge of God and of the things of God.*

Sect. 2. *Containing ſeveral Directions how to improve in all Divine Knowledge.*

§. 1. *THou muſt endeavour dayly to grow in the Knowledge of God, and to get more clear, diſtinct, firm, well-ſetled apprehenſions of the things of God.* The Reaſon of this Advice is very plain, *viz.* That the more thou knoweſt of God, and the more clear thy apprehenſions of Divine things are, the better thou wilt love God, and the more cloſely will thy heart cleave unto him. There are ſome things indeed of ſuch a nature, that the leſs men know them, the more they eſteem and love them: whil'ſt they look upon them at a diſtance, and know them but imperfectly, they ſeem great and good, worthy of their Eſteem and Love; but when they come to handle them, and know them throughly, they are convinced that they deſerve neither. But

now the things of God are of another Sort; ſuch is the Perfection of their Nature, that the more they are unfolded to us, the more we admire them, and the more ſtrongly do they draw our Souls towards them: and if there be any men that do not value them, or are not in Love with them, we may be confident that they do not know them. Is it I that ſpeak this? or doth not the Scripture alſo ſpeak the ſame? Why then doth it ſo often tell us of wicked men, *That they know not God, that they know not the way of the Lord, nor the Judgments of their* God, *Jerem.* 5. 5. and *cap.* 9. 4. *v.* And what is it, that St. *John* means, when he tells us, *That by this we know that we know him, if we keep his Commandements: he that ſaith he knoweth him, and keepeth not his Commandements, is a Lyar, and the truth is not in him,* 1 *John* 2. 3, 4. Doth not this imply plainly, that they who know God truly, will obey him, and that the Reaſon why they do not love and obey him, is their Ignorance of him, or the Imperfection of their Knowledge? either they know not God at all, or their Knowledge is ſo weak, ſo ſleight, ſo Imperfect, that it makes little or no Impreſſion upon their hearts: their Conceptions of God are like thoſe Conceipts which we have of ſome things in our ſleep, which either affect us not

not at all, or are forgotten by us, as ſoon as we awake. We believe, and we believe rightly, That the Saints in Heaven ſhall never fall from God, but will love and ſerve him for ever, without the leaſt Failing or Imperfection: and what is the Reaſon of it? Surely it is becauſe they *know him as they are known of him* 1 *Corinth.* 13. 12. Or as St. *John* ſpeaks, *they ſee him as he is,* 1 *John* 3. 2. *i. e.* they have the cleareſt, firmeſt, the moſt full and comprehenſive Knowledge of him, that Creatures can have, by which they are transformed into his Image, and made like unto him. He that does know God truly, does alſo know himſelf; and he that does know God and himſelf truly, cannot but keep himſelf in a State of Reſignation, and Subjection to God continually. He will feel thoſe Impreſſions upon himſelf, which holy *Job* did, when God had made himſelf a little better known unto him, than he was before, [See *Job* 38. 39.] and will ſay from the very bottom of his heart, as holy *Job* did; *Behold I am vile, chap.* 40. 4. *v.* he will know, that it is not for a Worm to contend with the Creator of all things, not for him that was born like a wild Aſſes Colt, (as one of *Job*'s Friends ſpeaks) to preſume to find out the Almighty to perfection. He will feel the truth of what the Pſalmiſt ſaies,

Pſal. 9. 10. *They that know thy Name, will put their Truſt in thee:* and will heartily aſſent to that Saying of a great man, *That the more we reject our ſelves, and commit our ſelves to God, the better it is for us.* He will ſay as a devout man once did; *What art Thou O Lord, and what am I?* He will be continually admiring his Sovereign Greatneſs, and will be no leſs ſenſible of his own worthleſneſs, and nothingneſs. He that knows God truly, will alſo know the World; and he that knows God and the World aright, will never be drawn from God by any of the World's Allurements; he will know, that the World is nothing of it ſelf; And will he ſet his heart upon that which is not? He will know, that without God, it can contribute no more to his happineſs, than it did to his Being, which he knows himſelf indebted only to God for: and can that ſteal away his heart from the Author of all Good, which never did, nor can beſtow the leaſt Good upon thee? How vile doth this Earth ſeem unto us, when we lift up our Eyes and look upon the Heavens? Surely much more vile will all things be eſteemed by him, whoſe Soul is poſſeſſed with a true Knowledge of the maker of them. It was therefore a true Saying of a Holy man of old [St. *Auſtin*] *That no man loſes God, but he that is deceived.* And another perſon many

Mich. de Montaign.

many years after him, is ſaid to ſpeak no worſe, when being in an extaſy, he cryed out: *O my God! O my Lord! O the God of my Heart! O that all men did know thee! they would never offend thee, they would ever love thee.* For ſurely, (as the Author of the *Book of Wiſdome* tells us) *To know God is perfect Righteouſneſs, and to know his Power is the root of Immortality, Wiſd.* 15. 4. This may ſuffice to ſhew thee the Reaſon of my Advice. Let me now as briefly, direct thee how to practiſe it.

§. 2. To this Purpoſe let me tell thee,

1. That thou art not concerned to know as much as may be known of God, or as learned men do know: but only ſo much as is neceſſary, or as may be helpful to keep thee entirely reſigned, and obedient to his Will; and therefore thou muſt not trouble thy ſelf with thoſe nice and curious Speculations in Religion, which are of no Uſe or tendency to this End. That Knowledge, whatever the Object of it is, which will not conduce to make thee better, or prevent thy becoming worſe than thou art, is impertinent, uſeleſs and unprofitable; the Hunting after it hath ruined thouſands, but never ſaved one Soul. Thoſe that purſue after it, are thus deſcribed by St. *Paul.* 1 *Tim.* 6. 3, 4.

They conſent not to wholſome words, and to the Doctrine which is according to Godlyneſs, they are proud, knowing nothing, but doting about Queſtions and ſtrifes of Words.

2. Though thou art not concerned to know as much as may be known of God, yet thou muſt endeavour to know theſe great and uſeful things I have ſpoken of, as well as poſſibly thou can'ſt; and therefore, thou muſt not content thy ſelf with that ſleight, ſuperficial Knowledge, which the generality of Men have of them, who rather dream of divine things than know them, but thou muſt labour for a clear, diſtinct apprehenſion of them, and for a firm and well-grounded perſuaſion, both of the Truth and Goodneſs of them. And to this Purpoſe, thou muſt

3. Apply thy ſelf to the Uſe of all good Means, and that with great Care and Diligence; remembring, That if it be Folly to do meaner things ſleightly, (as certainly it is, becauſe many things many times depend upon our leaſt actions) to be careleſs and ſleight in ſuch a manner as this, can be no leſs than Madneſs. Now the means that you are to uſe, are theſe that follow:

1. Reading the Holy Scriptures, and Hearing

ing them read; this thou art to do dayly; thou must borrow some part of every day (to say nothing here of what thou art to do upon Holy dayes) from thy Worldly Employments, to read or hear them read. Our Blessed Saviour bids us *Search the Scriptures, because in them we think we have eternal Life, John* 5. 39. And St. *Paul* tells us, *that they are able to make us wise unto Salvation, 2. Tim.* 3. 15. And if any mans words are of greater weight with us, than theirs, we do ill deserve the Name of Christians.

2. Reading Good Books; I call those good, which treat of the great things of God modestly, discreetly, plainly, convincingly, and affectionately: of which sort I know not many in the World, and therefore thou art to take the best Advice thou can'st have, in the choice of them.

3. Hearing of Sermons and good Discourses made by Christ's Ministers, whether in the Pulpit upon particular Texts of Scripture, or in the desk, as expositions of some larger Portions of it, or of some of the chiefest Points of Religion, contained in the Catechism. These Discourses Christ's Ministers are commanded to make, for the Edification of Christ's Church, [See 2 *Tim.* 4. 1, 2.] and therefore

Christian people must needs think themselves bound to attend unto them, and they are over wise or over good, that conceit they have no need of them; I mean, that they are neither wise nor good.

4. Frequent conferring with serious Christians about divine things, which is a means of Improving Knowledge, that hath several Advantages above any other; for besides this, we shall instruct others as well as our selves, imparting our own Knowledge to them, whil'st we receive of theirs; that which we thus learn, we apprehend more clearly, and are more deeply affected with, than we are with that which we receive any other way; and therefore, it is much to be lamented, that it is no more used by those that call themselves Christians, than we see it is: and if we may not infer from the neglect of it, that men are not so knowing in the things of God, as they take upon them to be; I am sure we may conclude from it, that they are not so good as they ought to be: they seldom forbear to talk of that which they love, when there is occasion offered for it; so they would never be silent in these things, if they had that hearty affection for them, which they ought to have. And as for the common Excuse among the more se-

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rious ſort of people, that they would not be taken for Hypocrites, (as too many in this laſt Age, among whom this hath been in Faſhion, have diſcovered themſelves to be:) it is ſo far from juſtifying their Neglect, that it manifeſts the naughtineſs of their hearts, whil'ſt they ſhew their ſelves more careful for their own Eſteem among men, than for the Honour of God, and the great Concerns of their Souls. There would be little or no Religion ſeen in the World, if the Abuſe of it by Hypocrites would warrant men to caſt off the Profeſſion of it; and to give any good Reaſon, why ſo uſeful a part of it, ſhould for that cauſe be laid aſide, whil'ſt they think themſelves concerned to appear Religious in other things, I believe will puzzle the moſt ſubtle among them. There were too many Hypocrites in Holy David's time, and *yet his tongue did not ceaſe to ſpeak of God's Righteouſneſs, and of his praiſe all the day long*, *Pſal.* 35,28. And the Apoſtles times were not ſo happy, as to be without them, and yet They called upon Chriſtians, *to exhort one another dayly*, *Heb.* 4. 13. *And to teach and admoniſh each other, and that by Pſalms and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs*, as well as other wayes, *Coloſ.* 3. 16. Thoſe good men did never think, that the danger of being accounted Hypocrites would diſcharge them from *Seaſoning*

ſoning their Diſcourſes with Salt, or from ſpeaking ſuch things in their Converſation with each other, as might be profitable, *and miniſter* Grace *unto the Hearers*, *Epheſ.* 4.29. and *Coloſ.* 6.4. and why we ſhould think, that it becomes us to uſe that unprofitable, not to ſay that corrupt, Communication which dayly proceeds from our Mouths, without having any reſpect to the edifying of one another in that which is good, I cannot underſtand.

5. Meditating frequently upon the good things we read and hear. This is another means for the improvement of our Knowledge in the things of God, and it is ſo neceſſary, that without it all the reſt will avail us but very little; for this is the chewing, or rather the digeſting of what we read and hear: it is that which implants thoſe notices of things which we have got into our heads, in our hearts, and makes them to bring forth thoſe good Fruits which in their own Nature they are fit to do. It was a good Obſervation of a great man ſome years ago, That in all humane ſects, there were never any, what difficulty or ſtrangeneſs ſoever their Doctrine maintained, but would in ſome ſort conform their Behaviour, and ſquare their Lives unto it: whereas this Divine and Heavenly Inſtitution, which we pretend to prefer before all

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Doctrines

Doctrines that ever were in the World, ſeldom makes Chriſtians but by the tongue; of which this Reaſon may be given, as pertinent to our preſent buſineſs, that thoſe being in Love with their Doctrines, how abſurd ſoever they were, either becauſe they were of their own Invention, or becauſe they had their firſt Inventors in great admiration, did ſo exerciſe their thoughts upon them, that their Souls could not but receive ſuch Impreſſions from them, as appeared in their outward Behaviour; whereas moſt of thoſe that are called Chriſtians, having no ſuch kindneſs for this Heavenly doctrine, or the Author of it, do never employ their thoughts about it; or if they do, it is ſo ſeldom, and in ſo ſleight, and careleſs a manner, that it cannot work any good effect upon them. Did they meditate dayly upon it, as holy *David* did upon God's Law, *Pſal.* 119. 97. did they examine its truth, did they weigh its Goodneſs, did they apply it to themſelves, and make tryal of its Force and Power upon their Souls, they would be ſo faſhioned to the Image and Likeneſs of it, as to be known by their Lives and Converſations from all other men. Thou muſt be frequent then in the Uſe of this mean, and let no day paſs thee without ſpending ſome time in it: and if thou art in ſuch Circumſtances at any time, that thou muſt either omit to read good Books,

or

or to meditate, I advise thee to omit that, rather than this: for he that reads but little, and meditates much, will be a wiser, and better man, than he that reads much, and meditates none, or but very little.

6. Prayer. This is a means which must accompany all the rest, and ought never to be omitted; for certain it is, that we can know no more of God, than we are taught by him; if he do not manifest himself unto us, if he do not enlighten our Minds, and assist our Endeavours, we shall advance but little by all we can do. The *Psalmist* tells us, that *it is God that teacheth men Knowledge*, *Psal.* 94. 10. and St. *Paul* tells us, *That Wisdom and Knowledge are the Gifts of his Spirit*, 1 *Cor.* 12. 8. and if we desire that Spirit, or those Gifts, we must ask for them; for, thus did the Holy men of old, as the Scripture assures us, *Psal.* 25. 4. *v.* *Psal.* 119. 66. *v.* And this the Apostle St. *Paul* taught us to do, when he prayed for the *Colossians*, *That they might be filled with the Knowledge of God, in all Wisdome, and spiritual Understanding*; *That they might walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good Work, and encreasing in the Knowledge of God. Coloss.* 1. 9, 10. And then in the last place,

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7. There is another means of improving our Knowledge, of as great Uſe, though little thought of, as any of the former; *viz.* the making a right Uſe of that which we know, by applying it to practice, and regulating our Lives and Converſations according to it: by thus uſing what we know, we ſhall come to know it better, for there is no Knowledge comparable to that, which we call experimental; and he that *taſts* how good the Lord is, and how good the things of God are, which is the word by which the *Pſalmiſt* expreſſes this Knowledge *Pſal.* 34. 8. *v.* knows them as much better than others do, as they that taſt the ſweetneſs of Honey, know it better than they that have only heard of it. Beſides, by this Uſe of what we know, we are put into a better diſpoſition to know thoſe things which as yet we know not; for, as ſome of the old Heathen wiſe men were wont to ſay, *as no eye can behold the Sun, if it hath not the Image of the Sun in it, ſo no man is capable of underſtanding the things of God, but he whoſe Soul is in ſome meaſure faſhioned to the likeneſs of God*; and this is confirmed by a more skilful man in Divine things, than the wiſeſt of them, I mean St. *Paul*, who tells us, *that the Natural* (or *animal*) *man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, becauſe they*

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are ſpiritually diſcerned, 1. *Corin.* 2. 14. which aſſertion is grounded upon this truth, That there muſt be ſome conformity between the knowing faculty, and the thing to be known, or elſe there can be no Knowledge; and therefore, if we do not improve that little Knowledge which we have by the light of Nature, according to thoſe ſmall Remains of God's Image in us, to the mortifying of our naughty corrupt affections; and if we uſe not thoſe external Helps to that light which God gives, to the ſpiritualizing of our Minds, we can never truly underſtand the things of the Spirit; whereas, doing this, we ſhall be able to judge (or to diſcern them) clearly. And this is that which our great Maſter teaches us, *John* 7. 17. where he ſhews us what we muſt do to attain a true and ſaving Knowledge of his Doctrine; *if any man will do his Will, he ſhall know of my Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I ſpeak of my ſelf.* and in another place, to encourage us to the Practical Uſe of what we know, he tells us, *He that keepeth my Commandements, he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me, ſhall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and manifeſt my ſelf unto him, John* 14. 21. *v.* Thus have I ſhewed thee how thou muſt endeavour to improve thy ſelf in the Knowledge of God. I now proceed

proceed to give thee some further Advice.

CHAP. V.

Sect. 1. *Containing a Fifth Advice, To live alwayes as in God's Sight; with the great Usefulness of this, to promote a Holy Life.*

Sect. 2. *Containing some Directions for the Practice of this Duty of Living alwayes as in God's Sight.*

§. 1. *Thou must live alwaies as in God's Sight, or (as the Words of the Psalmist are* Psal. 16. 8.) *thou must set God alwaies before thee.* This is a Rule of so great Use in a Holy Life, that some spiritual Guides have thought, that it may serve instead of all other Rules. And truly, if we suppose men to have that sound Knowledge of God, which I have but now advised thee to seek after, I know no reason but it may; however, the Usefulness of it must be acknowledged to be great, and it lies so plain, that many words need not be used to shew it thee; for if clear and sound

ſound apprehenſions of God's Majeſty, of his ſovereign Power, unſearcheable Wiſdom, Goodneſs and Truth will poſſeſs our hearts with Love, and Fear, and bow our Wills to his Obedience, as I have ſhewed thee that they will: Surely that which will keep thoſe apprehenſions alwayes preſent, and in Force upon our Minds, (as the Practice of this Rule will do,) will keep us alwayes reſign'd and obedient to him. We know by Experience, that the Eyes of thoſe whom we honour, and in whoſe Favour we deſire to be, have a great Influence upon us, and make us take heed to our ſelves, and to all our Behaviour; and therefore, the Maſters of Virtue among the Heathens were wont to adviſe their Scholars to imagine ſome excellent perſon, for whom they had a great veneration, to be alwaies preſent with them, as an obſerver of their actions. And can the remembrance of God's All-ſeeing Eye be leſs powerful with us, to make us circumſpect in our wayes, and careful to approve our ſelves in all things to him? Can we have a greater Regard to the Eyes of Mortal Men, whoſe Favour or good opinion can never ſtand us but in little ſtead, than we have to the Eyes of the Everlaſting God, in whoſe Favour is Life, and in whoſe approbation, conſiſts our everlaſting happineſs? No; it is impoſſible. *I have thought*

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on thy name, saith the Psalmist, and *have kept thy Law.* And in another place, *my wayes are alwaies before thee, therefore have I kept thy Precepts and thy Testimonies*, *Psal.* 119. 168. *v.* It is not unknown that some of the worst of Men, are sometimes restrained from doing evil, by the thoughts of God's presence; and the great Care that most of them take to avoid thinking upon God, is no inconsiderable Argument, that the bearing him alwayes in their Minds, would prove an absolute Cure to their wickedness: For, wherefore do they put away the thoughts of him as much as they can, but because they are sensible, that those thoughts would constrain them to become new men, and to relinquish those filthy Practices, which they cannot find in their Hearts to forsake? It is a good Story and may fitly have a place here, which we have from one of the Fathers of the Church, if my memory fails me not, 'of 'a young man who being tempted by a wan-'ton Strumpet, seemed to consent to her un-'lawful Desires, but required some secret place 'to content her: She therefore lead him into 'a private Room, and when he excepted a-'gainst it, as not private enough, she led 'him into another, and that not pleasing 'him, she brought him into the most secret 'place in the house, and told him, that

'it was not poſſible any Eye ſhould ſee him 'there, or that any ſhould come to interrupt 'them: But then the young man putting on a 'more ſerious Countenance, demanded of her, 'Whether ſhe thought that they could there 'be concealed from the Eyes of Almighty 'God? with which Queſtion, and ſome 'ſhort Diſcourſe that was pertinent to it, he 'did not only cool her Luſt for the preſent, 'but converted her altogether from her filthy 'Courſe of Life. Now, if the conſideration of God's preſence does ſometimes work theſe good effects upon ſome of the worſt of men, who neither know him truly, nor love him heartily, and who have been ſo far from both, that they have preferred the pooreſt Objects of their Luſts before him, how happy will the effects of it be upon thoſe, who have ſo known and loved him, as to renounce both themſelves and the World for his ſake, who love him as much for his Goodnes as they fear him for his Power; and who had rather dye, than diſpleaſe him, not ſo much becauſe he can puniſh, as becauſe they know him to be worthy of all the Love, Service, and Obedience, that they can poſſibly pay unto him? Surely, as thoſe men cannot but delight to think of him, and cannot but account themſelves happy, that they are alwaies under ſo good an Eye; ſo the remembrance,

brance, & consideration of it, must needs keep them constantly resigned to him, and in all things obedient to his Will. Thus much for the Reason of my Advice: I proceed

§. 2. To direct thee in the Practice of it, It must be confest, that it will be a hard matter for some to practise it: those that are Slaves to their flesh, and to the World, and are not at liberty to think seriously of any thing else, and whose Consciences are burthen'd with the Guilt of many Sins, will find it very difficult, if not impossible, though they be ever so well directed: Such men must first practise the Duties of Self-Denyal, and Resignation: But to those that are rescued from under the Tyranny of those cruel Masters, and are entirely resigned to God, and united to him by Love, as I hope thou art, nothing can be more easy, pleasant and delightful, our Souls willingly employing their thoughts upon that which they Love, and gladly embracing all opportunities of being in its presence; and therefore very brief Directions may suffice thee concerning it, and

1. Let me advertise thee, that the Practice of it must be grounded upon a firm persuasion of God's Omnipresence, and Omniscience: he *fills Heaven and Earth*, as himself tells us

Jerem. 23. 24. He encompaſſes them without, and He fills them within; and as the Author to the *Hebrews* aſſures us, *all things are naked and open to his Eyes, chap.* 4. 13. they pierce to the very marrow of our Bones, and to the bottom of our Intrails; they accompany all the extravagant wandrings of our Imaginations, and diſcover the hidden Images of our memories: they look through the Cloſet-Foldings of our hearts, and diſcern the moſt ſubtil Devices of our Spirits. Now, the firm belief of thoſe things being laid for a Foundation, thou muſt accuſtome thy ſelf,

2. To behold God in every thing; though he is no where to be ſeen by the Eye, yet thy mind may perceive him in every place, and in every thing, in the Heavens above, and in the Earth beneath, and in every part and corner of them: in the men thou converſeſt with, and in the beaſts thou ruleſt over; in the Fouls of the Air, and the Fiſh of the Sea; in the Graſs of the Field, and the Trees of the Forreſt; in thy ſelf, and in every thing round about thee; in all theſe he may be clearly diſcerned exerting that Power, Wiſdome and Goodneſs, which firſt gave Being to them, in ſuſtaining, preſerving and diſpoſing of them. And does he thus lye open to thee

thee in every thing, and has he made thee capable of diſcerning him, and wilt thou take no notice of him? far be it from thee. But then,

3. Thou muſt not only behold God in every thing, but thou muſt behold him in every thing looking upon thee, obſerving what Regard thou haſt to him, what Reſpect thou beareſt him, and how thou demeaneſt thy ſelf before him; as thy Heart muſt tell thee whereſoever thou art, and whatſoever thou lookeſt upon, that God is there; ſo it muſt tell thee likewiſe, that there God ſeeth thee. God is with thee every where, and his Eyes are alwaies upon thee; be thou alſo at all times with God, by an actual Remembrance of him, and the Application of thy mind unto him. The people of *Iſrael* committed great wickedneſs, becauſe they ſaid in their hearts, *God hath forſaken the Earth, and the Lord ſeeth not Ezek.* 9. 9. do thou bring thy heart to tell thee the Contrary in all thy wayes, and that will reſtrain thee from every evil thing. But then to make this Practice both more profitable, and more pleaſant to thee, thou wilt do well in the laſt place,

4. To accuſtom thy ſelf to frame ſome Acts of Love upon every apprehenſion of God's preſence, and in all Humility of Soul to offer them unto him. As God is worthy of the greateſt Love of our Souls, ſo in every thing we look upon, he appears to be ſo: and therefore it is very fit, that we ſhould expreſs our ſelves to be ſenſible of it, by ſome Acts of Love, as often as any thing preſents him to our minds: now theſe Acts may be made ſeveral wayes; I will ſet thee down ſome of the chiefeſt of them, to the end that thou may'ſt more readily lay hold upon all occaſions that are offered thee for ſo good an Exerciſe. They may be made,

1. By way of Admiration and Tranſport. Thus, O God how great is thy Majeſty! how great is thy Goodneſs towards the Sons of men! what manner of Love is that wherewith thou haſt loved us! O *the depth of the Riches, both of the Wiſdome and Knowledge of God! how unſearchable are his Judgments, and his wayes paſt finding out!* ſaid St. *Paul, Rom.* 11. 33.

2. By way of Eſteem and Preference. Thus may'ſt thou ſay, as a devout man was wont, *My God and all things!* and as another, *None but Chriſt, None but Chriſt*: and

as the Psalmist, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee*, Psal. 73. 25. and again, *There be many that say, Who will shew us any Good? but Lord, lift thou up the Light of thy Countenance upon us*, Psal. 4. 6.

3. By way of Protestation, and Resolution. Thus St. *Peter* thrice to his dear Lord and Master, *Lord thou knowest that I love thee*, John 21. 15. Thus the Psalmist, *I will love thee O Lord my strength*, Psal. 18. 1. *v.* and in another Psalm, *I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy Righteous judgments*, Psal. 119. 106.

4. By way of Desire and Aspiration. Thus may'st thou say with a Holy Father, *Let me find thee, O the Desire of my Heart; let me possess thee, O Love of my Soul! Let me hold thee fast for ever in the very midst of my heart, O blessed Life! O Sovereign sweetness of my Soul!* [St. *August.*] or with the Psalmist. *As the Heart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my Soul after thee O God; my Soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?* Psal. 42. 1, 2. When will the Lord call home his banished? when shall I return to my Father's House?

5. By way of Oblation and Reſignation. As thus, Lord I am thine, I am thine by a thouſand Titles, and I will be thine, and none but thine for ever; thine I am, thine is all I have, and therefore to thee do I reſign my ſelf and all.

6. By way of Humiliation, and Annihilation. Thus good *Jacob*, *I am not worthy of the leaſt of all thy Mercies* Geneſ. 32. 10. and *thus Holy* Job, *behold I am vile*, chap. 40. 4. and thus likewiſe the Pſalmiſt, *Lord what is man, that thou takeſt Knowledge of him, or the Son of man, that makeſt account of him? Man is like to vanity, his dayes are as a ſhadow that paſſeth away*, Pſal. 144. 3, 4. *v.* What art thou O Lord? and what am I? Surely thou art the fulneſs of Being, but I am nothing.

7. By way of Confidence and Reliance upon God. Thus, can a Woman forget her ſucking Child, that ſhe ſhould not have compaſſion on the Son of her Womb? yea, they may forget, but God will not forget his people. Though my Father and Mother forſaketh me, yet the Lord will take me up: though I periſh, yet will I truſt in him. He cloaths the Lillies of the Field, and feeds the Fouls of the Air, and will he not feed and cloath me? He hath given me his only begotten Son, and will he not with him give me all things?

8. By

8. By way of Benediction and Praiſe. Thus, Great is the Lord, and worthy to be praiſed, yea, his Name is exalted above all Bleſſing and Praiſe. All thy works ſhall praiſe thee O Lord, and all thy Saints ſhall bleſs thee. Whil'ſt I live, I will praiſe the Lord, I will ſing Praiſes unto God whil'ſt I have any Being.

Theſe are ſome of the wayes, wherein Holy men have been wont to expreſs, and exerciſe their Love to God, and in ſome or other of theſe I would have thee to be continually exerciſing and expreſſing thine, according as occaſion is given thee, or as the things that bring God to thy Mind do direct and lead thee. Thou wilt not be long accuſtomed to theſe Practices, but thou wilt be ſenſible of ſuch Advantage by them, as no words of man can expreſs: thou wilt perceive thy heart to be more cloſely united to God every day than other, and wilt have ſuch a ſenſe of his Love continually upon thy Soul, as will make all the Changes of thy Life comfortable, and fill thee oftentimes with joy that can be compared to none but thoſe of the Saints in Heaven. The truth is, we are never more like to thoſe bleſſed Spirits, than when we are thus employed; for what do they but contemplate the Beauty of his Majeſty, and make Acts of Love to him? But here's the

the difference, they ſee him clearly as he is, they behold his unveiled Face, and conſequently exerciſe their Love with the greateſt fervors, and partake of the higheſt joyes; whereas we, beholding him only in the Glaſs of his Creatures, are much more cold in our Love, and therefore leſs happy in our joyes.

I can foreſee but one thing that thou can'ſt object againſt theſe exerciſes, *viz.* that they will be a hindrance to thy Worldly Buſineſs. But this, one Word may ſerve to remove; For theſe being works of the Soul, which is an active and moſt nimble ſubſtance, and not requiring the help of any Member of the Body, may be intermixed with all thy ordinary Employments; and if there be any of ſuch a nature, as will not admit them without ſome little ſtop, as requiring a full application of thy mind; yet that ſtop will be no hinderance, but rather a mighty furtherance to them; for whil'ſt thou do'ſt thus look up to God upon whom the ſucceſs of every thing depends, thou wilt be able to proceed more cheerfully in thy Employments, and with greater Vigour, through the confidence of his Bleſſing upon all that thou art a doing.

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But there is one Advice more, which ſhall conclude this part, and may ſupply all that is wanting in it, *viz.*

CHAP. VI.

Containing the laſt general Advice, To commit our Souls to the Care and Conduct of Spiritual Guides; with proper Directions relating to it.

6. *THat thou muſt commit thy Soul to the Care and Conduct of a ſpiritual Guide.* for the enforcing of this Advice much might be ſaid, and indeed the little account that moſt men make of their ſpiritual Guides, in this Age, requires much to be ſaid; but becauſe I have ſet my ſelf but ſhort bounds, and becauſe I hope, that thou art well diſpoſed by the foregoing diſcourſes, to receive good Counſel, I ſhall be as brief as poſſibly I can with reſpect to thy Good. There are Three or Four things which are well known to Chriſtians, and I hope they will be readily acknowledged by thee for great truths, which being well conſidered by thee, will let thee know both how neceſſary, and how beneficial this Advice will be to thee.

1. Thou

1. Thou wilt acknowledge, that Christ hath ſettled an Order of men, as his Subſtitutes upon earth, to take Care of Souls to the end of the World. This we find him doing immediately before his aſcenſion into Heaven. Thus we read in St. *Matthew*'s Goſpel *chap.* 21. 18, 19, 20. *All power is given unto me in Heaven and in Earth, go therefore, and teach (or diſciple) all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt, teaching them to obſerve whatſoever I have commanded you, and lo I am with you alwaies even to the End of the World.* And thus we read in the 16. *c.* of St. *Marc. v.* 15, 16. *Go ye into all the World and preach the Goſpel to every Creature: He that believeth and is baptized ſhall be ſaved but he that believeth not ſhall be damned.* And thus in the 21. *c.* of St. *John*'s Goſpel, *v.* 21, 22, 23. *As my Father hath ſent me, ſo ſend I you; and when he had ſaid this, he breathed on them, and ſaith, receive ye the Holy Ghoſt whoſoevers Sins ye remit, they are remitted unto to them, and whoſoevers ſins ye retain, they are retained.* That our bleſſed Saviour ſaid all this to his Diſciples, no Chriſtian can doubt and that, by theſe words he did commit that Power and Authority to them, which he had received from his Father, for the Good of mens Souls, is not to be denied, and if any

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Question be made, whether this concerned the Apostles only, and was confined by him to their own persons; it may clearly be resolved by considering, 1. The importance of those words, *I am with you alwayes even to the End of the World*; for how could he be with them to the End of the World, if we suppose those words to concern their persons only? they might be with him indeed, but he could not be with them to the End of the World, who were not to be, or to exercise the Authority given them to the End thereof. 2. By considering the necessities of the World: for what an unhappy condition would they be in, who were to live in succeeding Ages, if no provision were made for their Instruction in the Christian Faith, &c. 3. By considering that the Apostles, after they had received the Holy Ghost in an eminent and remarkable manner, according to Christ's promise, did understand the Commission otherwise, and therefore we find, that they did by Prayer and Imposition of hands, (the ordinary way of conferring offices among the *Jews*) confer the like Power upon others, as they saw good for the edification of the Church: and those persons, upon whom they conferred this Power, are charged by them *to take heed to the flock, and to feed the Church of Christ, and are said to be called and appointed thereunto by the*

the Holy Ghoſt, Act. 20. 28. And further, thoſe perſons that were thus ordained by the Apoſtles, are charged by them to ordain others in the ſame way, and directions are given them, what manner of perſons they were to ordain to ſo great an office. Thus the Apoſtle St. *Paul* having put *Timothy* in mind of *that Sacred office to which he* had been *ordained by impoſition of hands*, 2 Epiſt. *chap.* 1. *v.* 6. and *of that form of ſound words, which he had heard from him in Faith and Love* v. 13. chargeshim to *commit the ſame to faithful men, who might be able to teach others alſo*, chap. 2. *v.* 2. And the ſame Apoſtle tells *Titus*, to whoſe Care he had committed the whole Church of the Iſland of *Creete*, *that he had left him there*, and appointed him *to ordain Elders*, i. e. Biſhops and Presbyters *in every City*, chap. 1. v. 5. To theſe St. *Paul* gives directions, *how they ſhould behave themſelves in the Church of God*, as his expreſſions are 1 *Tim.* 3. *c.* 15. *v.* Not only as to the ordaining of others, but likewiſe in many other things relating to the edification of the Church, *viz.* 1. as to preaching, *that they ſhould hold faſt that form of Doctrine which they had received, and teach that, and none other*, 1 Tim. 6. 14. and 2 *Tim.* 3. 14. 2. As to the publick Worſhip and Service of God, 1 *Tim.* 2. 1, 2, 3. 3. As to Government and Diſcipline, the holding

holding of Eccleſiaſtical Courts, the receiving of Accuſations, the conventing of the accuſed publikely, the correcting of heretical, and other diſorderly perſons, the ſtopping of their Mouths, and the Excommunicating them or caſting them out of the Church, *charging them to prejudge no man's* Cauſe, and *to do nothing for Favour or partiality* 1 *Tim.* 5. 19, 20, 21. *v.* and *Tit.* 1. *c.* 11. *v.* and *chap.* 3. *v.* 10. And ſo likewiſe as to the reconciling of Penitents, and reſtoring them into the Communion of the Church, and the hopes of Pardon, 1 *Tim.* 5. 22. *v.* By all which it appears plainly, that Chriſt did not commit the Care of thoſe Souls, which He had redeemed with his moſt precious blood, to thoſe only, who were in a particular manner called his Apoſtles, in the words before ſet down, but that he did there ſettle an Order of men, and give Authority to that Order in a perpetual ſucceſſion, to watch over them, and to ſee that none of them periſh, or fall ſhort of that Happineſs, which he deſigned for them. But,

2. Thou muſt acknowledge likewiſe that this Order of men, thus ſettled by Chriſt to take Care of Souls, are authorized and empowred by him to preach the Goſpel, to make known the Love of God, as manifeſted in

in Christ to the World; to receive those that do believe the Gospel into the Covenant of Grace, and society or Christians, by Baptism; to instruct those, whom they have baptized, in the Will of God, both publickly and privately, to encourage them in their Obedience to it; to excite and quicken them when they are dull and slothful; to reprove and admonish them when they do amiss; to restore them when they are fallen, to comfort them in their Sorrows, to pardon their Sins, to *feed* them with the Body and blood of Christ; to pray for them, and bless them in Christ's Name, to help them all the wayes they can in the whole Course of their Lives, and to assist them in their last Agonies, that so they may finish their Course with joy. This thou wilt plainly see if thou wilt consider, besides the places of Scripture already mentioned, the following Texts, *Act.* 20. 20, 21, 26, 27, 31. 2 *Tim.* 4. 1, 2. *Gal.* 6. 1. *v.* *Luke* 22. 19, 20. 1 *Corinth.* 11. 23, 24. *Jam.* 5. 14, 15.

3. Thou must acknowledge, that Christ hath promised *to be with those his Officers*, and *Ministers*, and accordingly he hath, is, and will be with them in the Exercise of the several parts of their office *to the end of the World*, *i. e.* He will assist them with special Illumination,

Illumination, Direction, and Power, ſufficient for the diſpenſation of the Goſpel, and the edification of the Church, and according to the neceſſities and capacities of the Times wherein they are to live: he will furniſh them with all neceſſary and requiſite Gifts, will accompany their Endeavours with his Holy Spirit, to make them effectual; will hear their Prayers, confirm their Cenſures, protect their perſons, *&c.* This we are plainly taught in ſeveral places of Scripture, beſides thoſe already pointed to. See *John* 14. 16, and 26. Where Chriſt promiſes his Apoſtles *a Comforter to be with them for ever, and to teach them all things.* And ſee *Epheſ.* 4. *c.* Where the Apoſtles ſpeaking of the ſeveral Officers that Chriſt hath appointed in his Church, and of the Gifts and Graces which he doth furniſh them withal, does intimate that theſe ſhall be continued in the Church, in ſuch a manner and meaſure as is neceſſary, *till we all come* (that is, both Jews and Gentiles) *into the Unity of the Faith, and unto a perfect man, unto the meaſure of the Stature of the fulneſs of Chriſt*, *i.e.* to ſuch prefection in Knowledge, Wiſdome and Goodneſs, as that there will be no further Danger *of being like Children toſſed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of Doctrine*, v. 13, 14. And further, thou may'ſt obſerve, That, as they are called *the Ambaſſadours of Chriſt*,

and are ſaid to beſeech men in Chriſt's ſtead, 2 Corinth. 5. 20. *So Chriſt is ſaid to ſpeak in them and by them,* 2 Corinth. 13. 3. Epheſ. 2. 17. *And to work mightily and effectually in them,* Gal. 2. 8. And further they are ſaid *to be Workers together with Chriſt,* 2 Corinth. 6. v. 1. And *to be Labourers together with God,* 1 Corinth. 3. 9. *God giving the Encreaſe, whil'ſt* Paul *planted,* and Apollos *watered* v. 6, 7. of the ſame chapter, and *God opening mens hearts,* Act 16. 14. which are ſaid to be pricked by the Apoſtles Preaching, *Act.* 2. 37. Laſtly, ſee *Revel.* 1. 13, 16. where to denote Chriſt's perpetual Preſence, Aſſiſtance, and Protection to theſe his Miniſters or Officers, the appointed Guides, and Governours of the Church, after all the times of the Apoſtles, *John* only excepted, Chriſt is repreſented, though in Glory, *yet walking in the midſt of the ſeven Churches of* Aſia, *and holding the ſeven Stars,* i. e. the Angels or Biſhops of thoſe Churches [*v.* 20.] *in his right hand.*

4. Thou muſt acknowledge likewiſe, That, as Chriſt hath appointed an Order of men, thus to guide and govern his Church, and hath charged them to attend unto it with all their Might, upon pain of anſwering for thoſe Souls that ſhall periſh through their Neglect or Default, [See *Ezek.* 34. 8, 9, 10. and

and *Act.* 20. 26, 27.] ſo he hath charged all men to reſpect them as his Officers, as the Guides and Governours of their Souls on Earth under him, and to ſubmit themſelves to their Conduct and Government, in all things relating to the Salvation of thier Souls: and this upon Pain of loſing all the Privileges, Advantages, and Benefits, which they can hope for, or pretend to upon the account of what he hath done, and ſuffered for us. Of this, thou wilt ſee no Reaſon to doubt, if thou wilt conſider, that this gracious proviſion which Chriſt hath made for mens Souls in appointing theſe Guides and Governours, and vouchſafing them all neceſſary aſſiſtances for the diſcharge of their office, will ſignify very little, in caſe men be at liberty to ſubmit to them or not, and may be ſaved though refuſing to ſubmit to them. But beſides this, (to give thee all the ſatisfaction that may be in a matter which many are very unwilling to underſtand) thou may'ſt conſider ſome few places of Scripture, which do plainly inform us of the Mind of Chriſt concerning it: [I omit what may be ſaid out of the Old Teſtament, and from the Prieſtly Power and Office under it, (as I have done all along,) becauſe I deſign not a full diſcourſe upon thoſe things.] As God the Father was pleaſed to declare;

That he had conſtituted his Son Chriſt Jeſus to be the ſupreme Guide and Governour of Souls, and to charge all men to hear and obey him, of which we have clear Teſtimony, *Math.* 3. 17. and *Math.* 17. 5. So Chriſt hath left to the World a clear Teſtimony, that he did commit the Authority which he had received from his Father, to his Apoſtles and their Succeſſors, [*John* 20, 21. *As my Father ſent me, ſo ſend I you,*] and that it is his Will, that all muſt hear and obey them, who will have any Intereſt in him, or Benefit by him; ſo in the places beforementioned *Math.* 28. 19, 20. and *Mark.* 16. 16. Where, giving Commiſſion to his Apoſtles to preach the Goſpel to all Nations, and to receive thoſe that ſhould believe, into that Covenant of Grace, which he had ſealed with his blood, by Baptiſm, he tells them: *He that believeth and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved; but he that believeth not, ſhall be damned,* i. e. thoſe that do heartily believe that Goſpel, which you preach, and do profeſs ſo to do, and do engage themſelves to be my Diſciples, and to obey my Commands by receiving Baptiſm at your hands, and do continue to learn from you what I have commanded, [compare theſe words with thoſe in St. *Matthew*] and practiſe accordingly in the whole Courſe of their Lives;

Lives, ſhall be ſaved; but thoſe that refuſe to do this, ſhall be damned; to which words if we joyn thoſe, which he ſpake ſome time before to his Diſciples, when he ſent them to preach the Goſpel to the loſt Sheep of *Iſrael*, *Luke* 10. 16. We ſhall underſtand his Mind more clearly. *He that heareth you*, ſaith he, *heareth me*; *and he that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me*; *and he that deſpiſeth me, deſpiſeth him that ſent me.* Where we ſee, that as he hath given that Authority, which he had received from his Father, to theſe his Miniſters, ſo he doth require all men to own it, and ſubmit unto it; and that he will account the Diſowning, the Not obeying, the Rejecting and Deſpiſing them in the Exerciſe of it, as the Diſowning, Rejecting and Deſpiſing of himſelf, and his Authority; and his Father likewiſe will judge it to be a Rejecting and Deſpiſing him, and his Sovereign Power and Authority. But this is not all that the Holy Scriptures ſpeak concerning this matter; it was foreſeen by God, how hardly the generality of men would be convinced of theſe things, and therefore the Holy Spirit ſtirred up the bleſſed Apoſtles, frequently to put men in mind of the Authority of Chriſt's Miniſters, and the Duty that we owe unto them. Thus we find St. *Paul* telling the *Corinthians*, *That they are the Am-*

Ambaſſadeurs of Chriſt, and Stewards of the Myſteries of God, and charging them to eſteem them as ſuch, 1 Corinth. 4. 1. *v.* and we find him beſeeching the *Theſſalonians to know them that did labour among them, and were over them in the Lord, and did admoniſh them; and to eſteem them very highly in Love for their work ſake,* 1 Theſſ. 5. 12, 13. And the Author to the *Hebrews* charges them, *to obey them that had the Rule over them,* [or their Guides, or Leaders, ſo the word ſignifies] *and to ſubmit themſelves*; and he backs his Charge with this Reaſon, *That they did watch for their Souls, as thoſe that were to give account,* i. e. they are appointed by Chriſt to watch for mens Souls, and they muſt give Account to him of the Souls committed to their Charge: and this they can never be able to do with any Comfort, if they will not obey and ſubmit themſelves to them: and this, (he tells them) *viz.* their making their Account ſad and grievous by their Non-Submiſſion, *would be unprofitable for them.* He means more than his words expreſs, according to a way of Speaking very uſual in the Scriptures, *i. e.* this will be ſo far from being profitable for them men, that it will bring the greateſt Damage and miſchief to them, *viz.* the Ruine and perdition of their Souls. I forbear to mention

mention any more places of Scripture, and I omit to urge the Practice of the first and best Christians, as also the black Characters that are given by some of the Holy Writers, of those that did slight the Guides and Governours of the Church, and refuse to submit themselves unto them; because I have promised not to be tedious.

Now having carefully observed, and seriously weighed these things, give me leave to put some few Questions briefly to thee. Dost thou believe that there is no need of these Spiritual Guides in the World? if there be no need of them, why did Christ appoint them? why did He not leave men to themselves in the Concerns of their Souls, as he hath done in those things that concern their Bodies, and their outward Estates? For, That he hath not appointed any Order of Men, to teach men how to provide for their Bodies, or to encrease their Estates, is confest by all. Was there need of these Guides for the first preaching of Christianity to the World, and is there no need of them for the propagation and maintenance of it in the World? I forbear to press thee with the Natural Blindness of mens Understandings, with that Inconsideration, Rashness, Levity, Inconstancy, which is inseparable to Humane Nature: as also with that Averseness to the

things of God, and the great Intereſts of our Souls, which all men feel, and good men cannot but complain of: We may be confident, That if Chriſt had not known, that the World needed ſpiritual Guides, He would never have appointed any ſuch, nor have promiſed them thoſe Aſſiſtances, which thou haſt now heard of, nor have taken any Care to inform men of the Duty they do owe unto them; and therefore are not thoſe men too much puft up in their fleſhly Minds, or too regardleſs of their Everlaſting Intereſts, that account theſe Guides to be of no Uſe to them; or are wanting in that Reſpect for them, and dependance upon them which they ought to have? I doubt not, but thou wilt confeſs it. But further, do'ſt thou not underſtand by what hath been ſaid, that men may receive very great Advantages by their ſpiritual Guides, if they pleaſe themſelves? Surely, thoſe of old, that received them as the *Galatians* did, *chap.* 4. 14. as *the Angels* of God, yea, even *as Chriſt Jeſus*, did believe ſo. Beſides, was not the making of this Proviſion for the Good of mens Souls, a great demonſtration of Chriſt's Love and Care for them? and therefore muſt not they be great deſpiſers of the Love of Chriſt, and Enemies to their own Souls, that make little Account of it, and ſeek no Advantage by

by it? or can they with the leaſt ſhadow of Reaſon call themſelves Chriſtians, or expect to be Partakers of thoſe Benefits which he hath promiſed to his faithful Servants, who have no Regard at all to his Ordinances and Inſtitutions, or no other Regard to them, than as they pleaſe their own Humors, and are agreeable to their Stubborn Wills? I doubt not but thou wilt anſwer to theſe Demands according to my hearts Deſire, and therefore thou can'ſt not but acknowledge, that my Advice is good and uſeful: That thou commit thy Soul to the Care and Conduct of a Spiritual Guide. I proceed now to ſhew thee briefly, how thou muſt practiſe this Advice.

The Practice of the former Advice.

1. Thou muſt make Choice of a good Guide. I call him a good Guide, who having Authority from Chriſt, is able to direct thee aright in all the Concerns of thy Soul; and will be faithful to thee. Chriſt hath no where promiſed, that none ſhall take upon them to be Guides of Souls, but thoſe that have Authority from him: nor that all thoſe that have Authority from him ſhall diſcharge their Office faithfully. Among his Twelve Apoſtles there was a *Judas*, and among

among the Seven Deacons ordained by the Apoſtles, Tradition tells us, there was one that failed: and in thoſe Writings that we have of ſome of the Apoſtles, we find complaints of ſome, that loved the World more than Chriſt, and their own fleſhly Luſts more than the Good of Souls; and St. *Peter* hath told us, that, *as there were of old, falſe Prophets among God's people, ſo there ſhall be falſe Teachers among Chriſtians, who through Covetouſneſs, ſhall with feigned words make Merchandize of them*, 2 Pet. 2. 1, 2, 3. And therefore it is no matter of Wonder, if there be ſome ſuch among us now; but it ought to be matter of Caution to thee, with whom thou do'ſt truſt thy Soul. Thy Soul is a Jewel of too great Value to be put into the hands of every Pretender, yea, or of every one whoſe office it is to take Care of Souls. And thoſe that are ready to follow the Conduct and Counſel of every one, that will take upon him to be their Guide or Inſtructor, are not much leſs to be blamed, than thoſe that will commit their Souls to none; and therefore, thou art to take the greateſt Care, and to uſe the beſt Skill thou haſt, in the choice of thy Guide; and becauſe it is a matter of no little difficulty to make a right Choice, it will not, I hope, be thought impertinent to give thee ſome aſſiſtance. And

1. I adviſe thee to betake thy ſelf to thy Cloſet, and to beg of God to direct thee in thy Choice. Though thou haſt ever ſo much Skill in judging of men, yet it is poſſible that in this Caſe thou may'ſt be deceived; and the more thou truſteſt to thy own Skill, the greater danger thou art in of being deceived, God uſually ſuffering thoſe that have a great opinion of themſelves, to miſcarry in their beſt Undertakings: and therefore in this, as well as in other things, thy ſecurity lies in an humble Confidence in God's direction, which thou art to beg of him by fervent Prayer; and though the Bleſſing be great, yet thou haſt no Reaſon to doubt but thou ſhalt obtain it, if thou do'ſt ask aright; for ſince he hath done ſo much for thy Soul already, He will not deny thee any thing, thou may'ſt be confident, that he knows to be neceſſary for its Welfare and Happineſs. *If any of you lack Wiſdome* (ſaith St. *James*) *let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it ſhall be given him*, chap. 1. v. 5. And what greater Wiſdome can'ſt thou deſire, than that which may enable thee to chuſe a good Guide; except it be that which may enable thee to follow him, when thou haſt made Choice of him? which thou art alſo to ask of God. But then,

2. Though

2. Though thou muſt not confide in thy own Skill, but in the Aſſiſtance and Direction of Almighty God; yet, ſince his Aſſiſtance and Direction can be expected only in a rational way, it will behove thee to make Uſe of that Skill which God giveth thee; and that, with as much Care, as if thy Succeſs depended altogether upon it. This, in other matters, thou thinkeſt thy ſelf bound to do; and I can ſee no Reaſon why thou ſhouldeſt not be of the ſame Mind in this Caſe. Thou muſt therefore look out into the World, and conſider, who among thoſe Guides of Souls that are known to thee, is moſt fit to be truſted; and if thou do'ſt deſire the opinion of ſome ſerious and diſcreet Friends, as thou art wont to do when thou needeſt a Phyſitian for thy Body, or a Lawyer for ſettling thy Eſtate; I think thou wilt do very well: only let me caution thee, That thou do not preſume to make Judgment of any one, with whom thou art not throughly acquainted; for otherwiſe, though it is poſſible thou may'ſt hit right, yet it is two to one, that thou wilt be deceived; which will be a fault that will admit of no Excuſe. And the ſame caution thou art to take in receiving the judgments of others: which thou wilt not think to be needleſs, if thou do'ſt conſider, That as ſome few have a better

better Repute in the World, than they do deſerve, ſo others have a worſe; and it is commonly obſerved, that many excellent men have ſuffered very much from many, meerly becauſe they have given Credit to the Reports of thoſe who were never intimately acquainted with them, and yet have preſumed to paſs their Cenſures on them. But to help thee as much as I can in this matter, which is really of very great Importance to thee, it will not be amiſs to give thee a ſhort Account of the Qualifications and Properties of a good Guide, referring thee for further Inſtruction to the Epiſtles of St. *Paul* to *Timothy* and *Titus*. And

1. A good Guide is one that hath received Authority from Chriſt, to take Care of Souls; not immediately from Chriſt, but mediately, *i. e.* by impoſition of hands from ſome Biſhop of the Church, who in a conſtant Succeſſion from the Apoſtles of our Lord, had Authority to give it. As for thoſe that pretend to derive Authority immediately from Chriſt, thou muſt look upon them as Impoſtors, till they can ſhew thoſe Teſtimonials of their Authority, which the Apoſtles did, *viz.* the Gifts of Tongues, and Miracles; and if their Learning and ſeeming Piety ſhould chance to incline thee to believe otherwiſe of them, it behoves thee to call to Mind that Caution

which

which Chriſt hath given thee, *Matth.* 7. 15. *Beware of falſe Prophets, which come to you in Sheeps-Cloathing, but inwardly they are ravening Wolves.* And as for thoſe that pretend to Authority derived by the hands of ſome of the Inferiour Miniſters in the Church, which are now, and have been for many hundred years called Presbyters, and by that name diſtinguiſhed from Biſhops; thou may'ſt upon the ſame grounds on which thou haſt received thy Chriſtianity, believe them to pretend to that which they have not; for it is certain by unqueſtionable Records, that for above fifteen hundred years, there was no ſuch Authority allowed, or acknowledged in Presbyters, by the Church of Chriſt: and as for thoſe in this laſt Age that did firſt pretend to this Authority, and did take upon them to confer it upon others by impoſition of their hands, it is certain that all the Authority they had, or could confer, they received from Biſhops, which was only an Authority to preach the Word, and adminiſter the Sacraments, according to the Rules of the Goſpel & the Canons of the Church, and this in Subordination to their Biſhops; and not an Authority to ordain others in oppoſition to their Biſhops; and therefore if it be true, That none can give that which they have not to give, and that none can be preſumed

ſumed to have received that which was never given them, as certainly it is; thou haſt great reaſon to believe that thoſe perſons, whom I now ſpeak of, have no Authority from Chriſt to take care of Souls. And then, in the laſt place, for thoſe that call themſelves the Miniſters of Chriſt, and pretend to have been ſo by the declared Conſent of a ſmall number of people combined together under the name of a Church; thou mayeſt believe them to be what they call themſelves, when they can prove, That the Apoſtles of our Lord were the peoples Miniſters, and not Chriſt's; I mean, That they did receive their Authority from the People, and not from Chriſt. Now if theſe men have no Authority from Chriſt, they have no Promiſe of Chriſt's preſence, aſſiſtance and Bleſſing in thoſe Exerciſes they take upon them to perform in his Name; and if they have no Promiſe of Chriſt's Preſence or Bleſſing, thou haſt no Reaſon to give up thy ſelf to their Conduct. Thou may'ſt perhaps hear them ſpeak many good things of themſelves and their followers, and make great Boaſt of the Spirit of Chriſt; but when thou haſt impartially conſidered, the Hereſies, Schiſms, Seditions, Tumults, Rebellions, Murders, Rapines, Perjuries, which they have been the Authors and Promoters of, thou wilt know how to judge of their great Boaſts, and Godly Pretenſions.

tenſions. By theſe their fruits thou may'ſt know them. I ſay no more, nor indeed ſhould I have ſaid ſo much, but that the Diſorders of the Age do make it neceſſary to give thee ſome little Caution.

2. A good Guide is a man of Knowledge. He is able to teach thee as much as thou art bound to believe and Practiſe: his lips preſerve knowledg, and his tongue can ſhew thee right things. He cannot be a good Guide to others, that has need of a Guide himſelf. *If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the Ditch*, Matth. 15. 14.

3. He is a man of prudence, and diſcretion; which appears both by his converſation, and in the Exerciſe of his Miniſtry, fitting his inſtructions to the Neceſſities, and Capacities of his people; *He poures not new wine into old Bottles*; He feeds not Children with ſtrong meat, and ſtrong men with milk: He provides for every one what is fitting for him, and that in due Seaſon. Indiſcretion does oftentimes as much miſchief, as the groſſeſt Ignorance.

4. He is humble, meek, and peaceable. So was the great Shepherd and Biſhop of our Souls: He was no Lordly, domineering perſon; no breaker of the Peace of the World, or Overturner of Governments: but was a Servant unto all, even to the meaneſt of the

the people: he pleased not himself, but others for their Good, and submitted himself patiently and quietly to the Authority of the Chief Priests, and of the *Roman* Emperour.

5. He is very grave and serious; not out of Soureness or Sullenness of Humor, but from a real sense of the Sacredness of his Office, the Worth of Souls, and the Account he must give of them. It is said of a devout man, that when some desired him to give them a certain Mark, by which they might know a man to be truly Spiritual, 'He answered them in this manner, if ye see any 'one that takes delight in the common Sportings and Jestings, the Ralleries and Drolleries of the World, that cannot patiently 'suffer Contempt and Reproach, take heed 'that you believe not that man to be Spiritual 'though you should see him work miracles. 'This good man was undoubtedly in the 'right, and I think he had not been mistaken if he had omitted the latter part concerning the Not suffering Contempt, and given the affectation of Wit and Drollery for a sufficient Mark of a very imperfect Christian; however, it may serve for a Mark to discover a bad Guide: for if every Christian should be a serious person, (because Christ was so) the Ambassadours of Christ should be

much more ſo; their Deportment ſhould be ſuch as may awe the men they do converſe with, and in a ſilent way deter them from their Sins; and their perſons ſhould ſpeak what the Statue of *Senacherib* is ſaid to have done. *He who looketh to me, let him be Religious.* But though a good Guide be thus grave and ſerious, yet he is not Crabbed, Moroſe, or Cynical; but,

6. Affable and Courteous, and of Sweet and Winning Converſation; he diſdains not to converſe with the meaneſt People, and that freely and cheerfully too; nor to conform himſelf to all the innocent Cuſtomes of the World, ſo far as conſiſts with the Sacredneſs of his Office, and the *Decorum* of his Perſon; having a due Reſpect to thoſe, he becomes all things to all men, and though his Gravity ſhews him to be an Enemy to their Sins, yet his innocent and cheerful Complyances, ſhew him to be a Lover of their Perſons. There was never any perſon more remarkable for this, than our bleſſed Saviour, who though his gravity was ſuch, that he was never ſeen to laugh, as we know of, yet was he of ſo ſweet and benign a Temper, and ſo courteous and complyant in all his Carriage and Converſation, that none were ever offended at it; & to his example does every good Guide of Souls conform himſelf

himself in this as well as in other things.

7. He is a man of Courage, he fears not the Faces of the greatest persons upon Earth, nor is discouraged in the doing of his Duty, by the Thoughts of their displeasure. He is another *John* the *Baptist* in this Respect, who was not afraid to tell the Tyrant *Herod*, *That it was not lawful for him to have his Brother's Wife*, Mar. 16. 18. And like St. *Paul*, he can be contented, if God will have it so, *not only to be bound, but to dye for the Name of the Lord Jesus*, Act. 21. 13.

8. He is wholly devoted to the Work that Christ hath appointed him to do; it is his only Business, and sole Care; and as Christ said of himself, that it was his Meat and Drink to do the Will of his Father, so 'tis his, to do the Will of Christ, in taking Care for Souls. He is no Plodder for the World, no Seeker of the Fleece, no Hunter after preferment; these Worldly things are as Dross and Dung to him, and he will not sell poor Souls for such Gains.

9. He is a great Lover of Souls, and of much tenderness and Compassion towards them; he will do any thing, yea, suffer any thing for their Good, and lay down his Life (if need be) for their sakes; he is grieved for their miscarriages more than for all worldly things, as *Christ was grieved for the hardness*

of men *hearts*, and is better pleaſed with their well-doing, than by the greateſt earthly Proſperity; they are his joy and Crown that do well by his Miniſtry: he thinks no Honour greater, and knows no greater joy.

Laſtly, He is a man of a Holy Life; his Example teaches us as much as his tongue, and he is a pattern for his People to walk by. *His Converſation is in Heaven*, and he can boldly call upon men to *be Followers of him, and to walk as they have him for an Example.* Though he is not without his Failings and Imperfections, as he is Fleſh and Blood, yet no Crimes, or groſs Sins, nor any Indulgeing, or Allowing of himſelf in the leaſt, can the ſharpeſt and moſt malicious Eye behold in him. Thus have I given thee a ſhort account of the Qualifications of a good Guide. Such a Guide thou may'ſt boldly commit thy Soul to, and if thou wilt follow his Directions, he will keep thee, through the Grace of God, from all things hurtful, and lead thee into all things profitable for thy Salvation.

But there is one thing, That I am concerned in this place to mind thee of, *viz.* That, if the Curate of the Pariſh whe rein thou liveſt, be thus qualified, thou haſt a Guide provided for thee, and thou muſt ſeek no further; for, he hath the Charge of thy Soul committed to him by God, and he muſt give an account

count of it to God, which because he cannot do if another have the Conduct of thy Soul, thou must not upon any pretence refuse his Conduct, and submit to another's; besides, in this Case thou can'st not reasonably expect the Blessing of God, under the Conduct of another; because, to please thy self thou do'st act clean contrary to the Ordinance of God, and preferrest thy own Wisdome, before the Wisdome of his Providence; besides, thou can'st not hope to fall under the Conduct of a good Guide, if thou do'st reject him, who by the Appointment of God ought to have the Conduct of thee, because no honest and prudent Guide will allow of this Practice, or take the Care of any upon him that belong to another Parish: except it be when the Parish is so unhappy, as to be under the Conduct of one, that is either grosly ignorant, or notoriously vicious. What I have said therefore of looking out for a Guide; thou must understand as meant only, when the Parish to which thou do'st belong, is in this unhappy Condition. In this Case, (though thou art bound to attend to the publick Exercise of his ministry, except thou art licensed by him or the Governours of the Church to do otherwise, and receivest much Benefit by it) thou art to follow, the Directions before given; but in no other. But to proceed,

2. In the ſecond place. Being reſolved as to the perſon thou deſigneſt for thy Guide, I adviſe thee to go to him; and having informed him of thy Deſire to ſave thy Soul, and to put thy ſelf under his Conduct in Order to it; beſeech him to receive thee into his Care, and to give thee ſuch Directions as he ſhall think neceſſary and fitting for thee; aſſuring him, that thou wilt follow them to the utmoſt of thy Power, and endeavour to ſhew thy ſelf a good Chriſtian in ſubmitting thing thy ſelf to him, as to Chriſt's Miniſter, and by depending altogether upon him. And that he may the better judge of the Honeſty and ſincerity of thy Heart in what thou telleſt him, and know what Directions thou haſt moſt need of; be not aſhamed to make thy ſelf fully known to him; tell him what manner of Education thou haſt had, what manner of Life thou haſt lead, what Convictions thou haſt had at any time of the evil of Sin, what Reſolutions thou haſt taken upon thoſe Convictions, how far thou haſt made them good, and wherein thou haſt failed: acquaint him with thy natural Temper, and thy acquired Inclinations: tell him, what evil Habits thou haſt contracted, what vicious Cuſtomes thou haſt been, or art engaged in, what Temptations thou haſt found thy ſelf moſt

most obnoxious to, and overcome by, &c. In a word, I advise thee to open thy very Soul unto him [he will help thee to do it by seasonable and fitting Questions, if he find thee willing] and conceal not the least thing from him. Thou would'st not scruple to discover the State of thy Body to thy Physitian, when thou needest his help; why then shouldest thou be shy of acquainting thy Spiritual Physitian with the State of thy Soul? Art thou more ashamed of the Diseases of thy Soul, than thou art of the Infirmity of thy Body? the greater Reason thou hast to desire their Cure, and in Order to it to make them known; will thy Physitian keep the Infirmities of thy Body secret? no less safe will the Secrets of thy Soul be in the Bosome of thy Spiritual Guide. Away then with that imprudent and unseasonable modesty, which will not do thee the least Good, but may be the Occasion of thy Ruine. Hear what a Heathen man hath said, and blush at the Folly of those that call themselves Christians. 'Thou saiest unto a vicious 'man, hide thy self with thy Vices, 'endure thy pestilent and dangerous Disease, 'conceal thy Envy and Superstition as certain Paintings, and beware, that thou give 'not thy self to such as can instruct and heal 'thee.' [this is the Advice of the Devil, and Plutarch.

'his Inſtruments upon Earth but the Ancients 'expoſed their ſick men to open View, That 'ſuch as paſſed by, and had been ſick of the 'ſame Diſeaſes, or had given Eaſe and Help 'thereunto, might ſignify ſo much unto the 'ſick man: and they affirmed that the Art it 'ſelf, improved by ſuch experience, to have 'been much bettered thereby and encreaſed; 'in like manner it may ſeem expedient to lay 'open the Sins of our Life, and the evil Affe-'ctions of the Mind, that it may be lawful 'for any man conſidering and beholding the 'ſame, to ſay, Art thou angry? take heed of 'this; Art thou vexed with jealouſy? do 'this; 'Art thou in Love? I my ſelf was ſo, 'but have repented; now, when ſome 'men hide their Vices, deny, and conceal 'them; what do they but faſten them 'more throughly and ſurely to themſelves? Thus a Heathen, whoſe words I do make the greater Account of, becauſe of thoſe of St. *James*, chap. 5. v. 16. *Confeſs your Faults one to another, and pray one for another*: which, if we underſtand, as many are willing to do, of making known our Sins to our Chriſtian Brethren, that they may the better underſtand what Petitions to put up to God in our behalf, they agree exactly with the Heathens Advice, though it be grounded upon another Motive; but the truth

truth is, the words are read in some Books thus; *Confess your Faults therefore to one another.* And so they plainly refer to the words before, concerning the Elders of the Church, and their Prayers for the sick, and the Effect of those Prayers, *viz.* the Recovery of the sick, and the Pardon of their Sins: and they import not our making Confession to our Christian Brethren; but, (as men (to use one of the Fathers words) do not lay open the Diseases of their Bodies to all, but to those that are skilful in the Art of Healing) to the Presbyters of the Church, whose Office it is to minister to the Health of Souls both by their Prayers and Counsels; and though the words [one to another] seem to make against this Interpretation, and to imply a mutual Confession to be made by Christians to each other; yet, if the Use of the Phrase in other places be considered, and particularly in that of St. *Peter*, 1. Epist. chap. 5. 5. v. *All of you be subject to one another*, which must be understood according to the Reason of the matter there spoken of, not of a mutual subjection, but of a subjection of all to those that are over them; they will be but of little weight against it; the whole Context & matter spoken of here, directing us to this Interpretation, as well as in that of St. *Peter*. But to let this pass, it is enough Basil.

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for my preſent Purpoſe, that it be granted to be expedient for men in order to their ſpiritual Welfare, to confeſs their Sins to their Chriſtian Brethren; and if it be ſo, I think it is not to be denied, but it is more expedient for them, to confeſs to thoſe whoſe Office it is to pray for them, and to counſel them, and who have miniſterial Authority from Chriſt to pronounce the Pardon and Abſolution of true Penitents. But to proceed,

3. Having thus acquainted the Spiritual Guide with thy Deſires, and having fully opened thy ſelf unto him, ſet thy ſelf to receive his Inſtructions; hear him, as thou would'ſt hear Chriſt himſelf, whoſe Miniſter he is, ſpeaking to thee; mark what he ſaies with the greateſt Care: if any thing fall from him, which thou do'ſt not fully underſtand, deſire him to explain his Meaning; if thou do'ſt diſtruſt thy Memory, his Inſtructions being many, deſire him to repeat them: and when he hath made an End, give him, together with thy Thanks, thy Promiſe to follow his Directions, and ſo begging his Prayers, and his Bleſſing in the Name of Chriſt, take thy leave of him.

4. As ſoon as thou art gone from him, begin to recollect the good Advices thou haſt received, and to practiſe accordingly; and omit not the Doing of any thing he hath adviſed

adviſed thee to. If any thing he hath adviſed thee to, ſeem hard, or without Reaſon, yet reject it not, but conſider; That, though thou do'ſt not perceive the Reaſon why he hath laid ſuch things upon thee, yet he may have ſeen good Reaſon for it; thou do'ſt not know but it was to try the ſincerity of the profeſſion thou haſt made to him, and to know the better how to fit himſelf to thy neceſſities hereafter: or it may be, he might (in prudence) deſign that thou ſhouldeſt not underſtand the Reaſon of Some particular Advices, till thou feeleſt the good Effect of them, and the great Advantages they bring thee, to diſpoſe thee the more readily and cheerfully to follow him for the Future; for, finding great benefit in that, in which thou couldeſt foreſee none, as well as in that which did promiſe thee much, as thou can'ſt not but think thy ſelf happy in meeting with ſuch a Guide, in Reſpect of that which is paſt, ſo thou can'ſt not but be mightily encouraged by it, to give him the entire diſpoſal of thee for the time to come. Be careful then, to obſerve his Directions in every thing: remembring, that as a ſick man can receive no Benefit by the beſt Phyſitian in the World, how well ſoever he has made him to underſtand his Diſeaſe, if he puts up his Preſcriptions in his Pocket, and makes

makes no further Uſe of them; ſo the Advices of thy Guide (how good ſoever they may be in themſelves) will be of no Advantage to thee, if thou do'ſt not follow them: nay, let me add, (which thou art concerned to remember,) that thy Caſe will be much worſe than the Caſe of ſuch an imprudent perſon: for, though he is not like to be benefitted by the Preſcriptions of his Phyſitian, yet he can receive no hurt by his not uſing them: whereas thou wilt receive much Dammage by neglecting thoſe that have been given thee; for, beſides this, that all inſincere dealing in matters of Religion, and trifling in holy things, if I may ſo ſpeak, does in it ſelf tend to harden the heart, and to make thee more regardleſs of the great Concerns of thy Soul; it will certainly provoke God to withdraw his Grace from thee, and to leave thee to fall into that Ruine and Deſtruction, which thou art but little afraid of, and takeſt no Care to avoid.

5. Return to thy Guide after ſome time, and give him an impartial account of the Uſe thou haſt made of his Inſtructions, and the Benefit thou haſt received by them; if thou haſt failed in any thing, confeſs it freely, and declare thy Reſolution to do better for the time to come; if thou can'ſt ſay that thou haſt failed in nothing, give God Thanks, and ſay as the young man did to our bleſſed Saviour,

Saviour, *Matth.* 19. 20. *What lack I yet?* And then receive his Directions, as thou did'st before, and take Care to practise accordingly.

6. Keep a constant Correspondence with him as long as thou livest; acquainting him from time to time, with the State, and Condition of thy Soul, with thy Progress in Wisdome and Vertue, with thy Temptations and Discouragements, with thy Failings and Imperfections, with thy Doubts and Fears, with thy Joyes and Sorrows, and undertake not any thing of moment or Importance without his Advice and Approbation; thou wilt quickly be sensible of such Advantages by this Course, as will effectually encourage thee to proceed in it. I will not insist upon that Peace and Satisfaction which thou wilt constantly enjoy in thyown mind by it, as having not only the Approbation of thy own Conscience in every thing thou do'st, but also the Approbation of one of Christ's Ministers, who is better able to judge of thy Actions, and may be presumed to judg more impartially than thy self would do. It may suffice to mention some of those services he will be continually doing thee; he will instruct thee in what thou art ignorant of, and will either prevent or rectify thy Mistakes; he will resolve thy Doubts, and remove thy Fears, and ease

eaſe thee of thy Sorrows: he will reſtrain thee when thou art too zealous and forward, and quicken thee when thou art dull and ſlothful, and refreſh and cheer thee, when thou art a weary; he will reſtore thee when thou art fallen, and apply the Promiſes of the Goſpel to thee, and help thee to take Comfort in them; he will remove many Difficulties out of thy way, and arme thee againſt Temptations, and ſupport thee under tryals, and be both a Guide and a Guardian to thee in all the dangerous and troubleſome Paſſages of thy Life; in a word, he will make thee to underſtand thy Duty fully, to know what is neceſſary, and what is lawful, and what is expedient, and what is ſeaſonable; and help thee to diſtinguiſh between Truth and Falſhood, Reality and Appearance, Good and Evil; he will excite and ſtir up thy Will to embrace the one, and refuſe the other; he will moderate thy affections, and keep thy Paſſions in Order, and preſerve thee in an even, ſteady Courſe of well-doing, and at laſt deliver thee up in Peace and ſafety into the hands of the great Shepherd and Biſhop of our Souls, Chriſt Jeſus.

Object. But it may be, thou wilt meet with ſome that will ask thee, What neceſſity is there for all this? Why may it not be enough for

for Thy Salvation, which is enough for the Salvation of moſt men, who live and dye, and go to Heaven without all this Trouble, contenting themſelves to have a Miniſter in their Pariſh, to hear him preach, and to receive the Sacrament from his hands? without putting themſelves or him to ſo much trouble concerning their Souls; if They may be ſaved without all this ado, why may'ſt not Thou? it is not good to be ſingular, and they that teach men to be ſo, are not their Friends.

Anſ. To thoſe men, many things may be replied, but it may ſuffice to offer theſe few things to their conſideration; we do not take upon us to judge of the everlaſting State of any, we leave that to be manifeſted in that day, which ſhall bring to light the moſt hidden things: we do not bind men to take this Courſe upon pain of everlaſting damnation: but ſurely, every man is concerned to endeavour to ſave his own Soul; and, whether the beſt way to do this, be to do as the moſt do, or to do as I have adviſed thee, do thou judge. Look into thee World, and obſerve the dayly Miſcarriages of thoſe men, whoſe Practice thou art urged to approve and imitate; how many of them after many years going to Church and hearing of Sermons, have no more Underſtanding in

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the very Principles of their Religion, than they had when they were Children, and of whom we may ſay as St. *Paul* did of ſome, *that they are ever learning, but never able to come to the Knowledge of the Truth*; 2. Tim. 3. 7. How many are puft up with a great opinion of their own Knowledge, that know nothing as they ought to know, and will never know any thing, becauſe thoſe that ſhould and would inſtruct them cannot know their Ignorance till it is too late to give them Inſtructions? how many of them become a Prey to Seducers, and drink in damnable Doctrines, with as much eagerneſs, as they ſhould do the moſt ſaving Truths, meerly becauſe they take upon them to judge of every thing, and will not take Advice of thoſe whom God hath ſet over them to direct them? How many go groaning under the Burthen of troubled Conſciences for many years, and it may be after all, become deſperate, and lay violent hands upon themſelves, becauſe they would not diſcover their Grief to a Spiritual Phyſitian, who might have poured Wine and Oyl into their Wounds, and have bound them up to their everlaſting Peace and Comfort? how many go on in an evil Courſe, who might be perſuaded to leave it, but for ſome Prejudices which they have entertained either againſt a

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good life in general, or ſome particular duties, or againſt ſome doctrine, which it received would work a Reformation in them; which Prejudices Chriſt's Miniſters cannot remove, becauſe they know them not. How many, in a word, that mean well, and make many good promiſes and reſolutions, are overcome by their Luſts, and the Temptations of the Devil and the world, meerly for want of particular Directions, as to thoſe Luſts, and thoſe Temptations? Theſe ſad Shipwracks, and many more which thou may'ſt dayly behold, may convince thee how dangerous it is to go in the common way, and how much ſafer it will be for thee to follow the Advice that I have given thee: and if men will not be perſuaded that it is their Duty to do thus, I am ſure they may ſee that it is ſo much their Intereſt, that they cannot deſpiſe it without deſpiſing their own Souls. And as for the Imputation of Singularity, which thou may'ſt be threatned with, it is but what the beſt of Chriſt's Diſciples have undergone in all Ages, and no good Chriſtian will make any reckoning of it: Were we to pleaſe men, we ſhould have Reaſon to dread it, but ſince our Buſineſs is to pleaſe God, and to ſave our Souls, it is no matter what they either ſay or think of us. Suppoſe, my Brother, That Chriſt had ſhewed him-

ſelf as much concerned for the health of our Bodies, or the Encreaſe of our Eſtates, as he hath done for the Salvation of our Souls; That he had appointed an Order of Men to teach us how to get money, or to preſerve our ſelves in health and ſtrength for many years; and had given them as ſtrict a Charge to take Care of it, and be diligent in it, and had promiſed them as great aſſiſtances to make their Cares and Endeavours effectual to theſe Ends, as he hath done to the appointed Guides of Souls; and that he had commanded all men as ſtrictly to reſpect them as his Officers appointed to theſe Purpoſes; to follow their Directions, and ſubmit themſelves in all things to them, as he has commanded men to ſubmit to their ſpiritual Guides: Suppoſing this, I ſay, do'ſt thou think that men would behave themſelves in that manner towards theſe good Friends of their Bodies, as they do to the great Friends and Guides of their Souls? Would they content themſelves to hear them read once or twice a week a publick Lecture of Phyſick, or good Huſbandry? no, no; we ſhould ſee every man running to their Houſes, and deſiring private Converſation with them: we ſhould hear one Saying, *Sir*, you take great Pains among us, and read very well and learnedly; but I am a poor ignorant man, and underſtand

ſtand but little, and remember leſs, and therefore I pray you to explain and repeat ſome of thoſe good things to me, which you ſpeak in publick. And another we ſhould hear complaining, That he could receive no Benefit by all his Pains, becauſe his Diſcourſes were not proper for his Caſe, and therefore, beſeeching him to conſider his particular neceſſities, and to give him Directions ſuitable thereunto, &c. This we may well ſuppoſe men would do, from what we ſee them do now, when they need the Advice of Phyſitians, and of the men of Skill in Worldly matters; and we may boldly ſay, that they would not ſpare (keeping ſtill to the former Suppoſition) to make loud Outcryes againſt the appointed Phyſitian, as being falſe to their Truſt, in Caſe they ſhould refuſe to hear them in private, and refer them to their Publick Lectures. Now let any man tell me, why men do not take the ſame Courſe for their Souls, which they would take for their Bodies and Eſtates? Will they ſay that their Souls have not ſo much need of the Help of Chriſt's Miniſters, as their Bodies have of the Help of Phyſitians; and that they know better how to ſecure their Spiritual, and Eternal Welfare, than they do their Temporal? This would betray more ſtupid Ignorance, or

deviliſh pride and Self Conceit, than they will be willing to diſcover. Will they ſay that the Miniſters may underſtand the particular neceſſities of every perſon, and provide for them without their taking the Courſe preſcribed; and that they may ſuit their Publick Inſtructions, Exhortations and Directions to all mens Capacities, how different ſoever they are? This will be, to make them more than Prophets, to aſcribe a kind of Omniſcience to them, yea, and an Omnipotence too; to make their Sermons, as God is ſaid by ſome to have made the *Manna* in the Wilderneſs, agreeable to the Taſte of every one; which I ſuppoſe no man in his Wits will do. What then is the Reaſon of it? for my part, I can give no other than this, That either they are groſſly ignorant, and little better than Beaſts in Underſtanding, or meer Infidels under the Name of Chriſtians; or if they do in ſome ſort believe the Goſpel, yet their hearts are ſo engaged to the World, that they cannot have any ſerious and Conſtant Regard to their Immortal Souls.

But, to put an End to this matter, let the Cauſe of the Common Practice be good or bad, I am ſure the Effects of it are ſad, and lamentable; the great Decay of Chriſtian Piety among us, the great Encreaſe of all manner of Wickedneſs, the Multiplying

ing of Errors, Schiſms, and Diviſions, hath no one more viſible Cauſe than this; and till men be convinced that they owe a greater Reſpect to their Spiritual Guides, than their Practice carries in it, and will be perſuaded to follow the Advice I have now given them, I cannot hope to ſee any Stop put to theſe Evils. I beſeech thee therefore, my Brother, by all that is dear to thee, not to deſpiſe my Counſel. Defer not to make Choice of a Guide; and when thou haſt done, be not ſlack to deſire his Advice, nor backward to follow it; thou may'ſt be confident of the Bleſſing of God in ſo doing: thy Guide is particularly concerned to give thee the beſt Advice he can, and God is concerned to make it effectual for thy Good, ſince he hath particularly ordained it for that End.

To theſe Directions I might add many more, *viz.*

That thou wilt do well to endear thy ſelf to thy Guide as much as thou can'ſt, that he may take the greater Care of thee, and be more ardently deſirous of thy Salvation; to which Purpoſe thou may'ſt do well to ſhew thy Eſteem of him, by a reſpectful Carriage before others. There was a great and good man once in the World, Mounſ. de Reale. that would never take place of a Prieſt before

fore the people, the Dignity of the Office requiring, as he believed, and deſerving the higheſt reſpect; and if any one ſay, that he was not of our Church, I anſwer, the greater Reaſon have moſt of us to be aſhamed of our ſelves, who call our ſelves reformed, and do worſe. And further, thou may'ſt do well to contribute cheerfully, according to thy Ability, towards his maintenance, if he be not plentifully provided for. The *Primitive* Chriſtians are not backward to do this; as thou may'ſt perceive by their devoting all that they had, to the Service of Chriſt and his Church *Act.* 4. 34, 35. and I wiſh I could not ſay, that the Sacrilege of many that call themſelves Chriſtians in this Age, did not make it in ſome ſort neceſſary for good Chriſtians to do the ſame now.

That thou muſt keep cloſe to thy Guide as long as thou liveſt, and never change him, if God's Providence doth not constrain thee.

That in all thy Intercouſe with thy Guide, thou muſt look beyond him; *viz.* to thy God, whoſe Miniſter he is, and who guides and bleſſes thee by his Miniſtry, to whom thou muſt dayly addreſs thy ſelf by Prayer for a Bleſſing upon his Endeavours, and to whoſe Goodneſs and Mercy thou muſt dayly aſcribe all the Benefit thou do'ſt receive by

by them. But I must forbear, having too far exceeded my Bounds already. I conclude all with the words of our dear Lord and Saviour. Now *thou knowest these things, happy art thou if thou do'st them. John* 13. 17.

The End.